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HUMPHREY, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER (1390-1447) AND THE ITALIAN HUMANISTS

BY

SUSANNE SAYGIN



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To my Parents

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AD</i>	<i>Archiv für Diplomatik</i>
ADC	Archives Départementales du Calvados
ADSM	Archives Départementales de la Seine Maritime
<i>AHC</i>	<i>Annuario Historiae Conciliorum</i>
<i>AHP</i>	<i>Archivum Historiae Pontificae</i>
<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
ANSTEY	<i>Epistolae Academicæ Oxoniensi</i> , ed. H. ANSTEY (2 vols., Oxford, 1898)
<i>ASL</i>	<i>Archivio Storico Lombardo</i>
A.S.V.	Archivio Segreto Vaticano
B.A.V.	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
<i>CPL</i>	<i>Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters</i> , eds. W.H. BLISS/J.A. TWEMLOW (14 vols., London, 1893–1960)
<i>C.P.R</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i> (for Henry VI's reign) (6 vols., HMSO, Norwich, 1901–10)
<i>EETS</i>	<i>Early English Texts Society</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>DBI</i>	<i>Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani</i>
<i>DHGE</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'Histoire et Géographie Écclésiastique</i>
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>GSLI</i>	<i>Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana</i>
<i>IMU</i>	<i>Italia Medioevale e Umanistica</i>
<i>MIÖG</i>	<i>Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Geschichtswissenschaft</i>
<i>QFIAB</i>	<i>Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken</i>
P.P.C.	<i>Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England</i> , ed. N.H. NICOLAS (7 vols., Record Com., London, 1834–7)
<i>R.P.</i>	<i>Rotuli Parliamentorum</i> (6 vols., London, 1767–77)
RYMER	<i>Fœdera, Conventiones, et Litterae</i> , ed. T. RYMER (20 vols., London, 1727–35).

INTRODUCTION

This book is concerned with the transmission of Renaissance humanism from Italy to England during the second quarter of the fifteenth century. Renaissance humanism has been understood and defined by historians as a broad concern with the study and imitation of classical antiquity which was focused on the *studia humanitatis* (grammar, rhetoric, poetics, history and moral philosophy), and found its expression in scholarship and education and in many other areas, including the arts and sciences. Renaissance humanists recovered, emended and edited classical texts; they undertook translations from Greek into Latin and from Latin into the vernacular. They promoted the revival of classical Latin and, arguing that the pursuit of eloquence (*eloquentia*) was inseparable from wisdom (*sapientia*), they applied their rhetorical abilities to the composition of orations, public and private letters, historical studies, treatises on moral philosophy and poetical works based on antique models. The works of the humanists were characterised throughout by a desire to imitate ancient authors and to emulate them in the elegance of their style, vocabulary and literary composition. To this the humanists added a new dimension that was not typical of ancient literature and that marked a sharp difference from the literature of the Middle Ages: the tendency to take seriously their own personal feelings and experiences, opinions and preferences. Humanism had its origins in the Italian city states of the Trecento. Reaching its first high point in Italy during the first half of the Quattrocento, when humanists gained prominence as high-profile clerks and pedagogues, the humanist movement spread to the rest of Europe in the course of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.¹

The transmission of Renaissance humanism to England in the fifteenth century has been the subject of two monograph studies, Walter Schirmer's *Der englische Frühhumanismus* and Roberto Weiss's *Humanism in England in the Fifteenth Century*.² Published in 1931 and

¹ KRISTELLER, P.O., 'Humanism', in SCHMITT, C.B./SKINNER, Q. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 113–37.

² SCHIRMER, W., *Der englische Frühhumanismus. Ein Beitrag zur englischen Literaturgeschichte*

1942 respectively, these prosopographical were works strongly indebted to the nineteenth century conception of the inherent superiority of the Italian Renaissance over the cultural achievements of fifteenth century Europe. Consequently, Schirmer and Weiss presented the spread of humanism to England as a self-explanatory process of cultural modernisation; they implied that the men who were involved in this process were driven by a largely disinterested zeal to bring the Quattrocento Italian enlightenment to the medieval darkness of fifteenth century England; evidence that pointed to difficulties in that process was interpreted as an indication of English backwardness.

In 1975, Denys Hay endeavoured to correct this image; he drew attention to the different social, political and economic structures in Italy and England and suggested that these factors were of pivotal importance for the understanding of the causes and of the characteristics of the transmission of humanism to England.³ Yet, as Hay only delineated his arguments in an article, the extensive studies of Schirmer and Weiss have continued to dominate the field.

In the sixty years that have passed since their publication, however, the historiography of both late medieval England and of the Italian Renaissance has undergone radical changes. In the 1960s, K.B. McFarlane's pioneering work on fifteenth century England triggered a shift of paradigms in the study of that period, and the increasingly insistent calls for a 'new constitutional history' since the late 1980s may be an indication that another such shift is close at hand. Meanwhile, the radical redefinitions of Italian Renaissance humanism as a decisive moment in the evolution of European political thought or as a professional and educational movement, that have respectively been proposed by Hans Baron and Paul Oskar Kristeller, have caused similar changes in Renaissance scholarship. Interdisciplinary studies by historians, anthropologists and sociologists have raised awareness of the importance and of the workings of patronage in late medieval Europe and in Renaissance Italy. Collections of essays on the transmission of humanism to individual European

des 15. Jahrhunderts (Leipzig, London, ¹1931/Tübingen, ²1963) (unless otherwise marked, all further references to SCHIRMER concern this work); WEISS, R., *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, ¹1941, ³1967) (unless otherwise marked, all further references to WEISS concern this study).

³ HAY, D., 'England and the Humanities in the Fifteenth Century', in OBERMAN, H.A./BRADY, T.A. (eds.), *Itinerarium Italicum. The Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of its European Transformations* (Leiden, 1976), pp. 305–67.

countries have drawn attention to the wider European context. Finally new, more dynamic approaches to the process of cultural transmission between Italy and northern Europe have been proposed.⁴

The insights gained by these new approaches challenge many of the tacit assumptions that formed the point of departure for the studies of Schirmer and Weiss, and therefore call for a revision of the established interpretation. The objective of the present study, which focuses on Humphrey, duke of Gloucester (1390–1447), is to offer such a revision. During the 1430s Gloucester successively employed two Italian humanists as “poets and orators” in his household; the duke commissioned important humanist works in Italy and between 1439 and 1444 he gave more than 240 manuscripts—among them many humanist works—to the university of Oxford, where his donations paved the way for the English reception of Italian humanism in the second half of the fifteenth century. Gloucester was thus not only the foremost patron of humanism in fifteenth century England, but also one of the earliest and most influential promoters of the Italian avant-garde in northern Europe. An examination of his patronage is therefore appropriate, both to elucidate the background of the transmission of humanism to England and to contribute to an understanding of the European context of this transmission process.⁵

Gloucester never went to Italy himself, and with one exception his contacts with the humanist community in Italy were established by middlemen. Previous studies have focused either on Gloucester or on the Italian humanists who sought his patronage.⁶ By contrast, the present inquiry endeavours to show the full patron/broker/client network in action. It focuses, therefore, successively on Gloucester, on his middlemen, and on the Italian humanists who sought the duke’s patronage. At the centre of the investigation is the question of the motives that encouraged each of these men to establish contacts

⁴ These new approaches are discussed in detail below, introductions to Parts One to Three.

⁵ The present study focuses almost exclusively on the transmission of humanist texts and ideas from Italy to England. The reception of these texts and ideas has recently been discussed by RUNDLE, D., ‘Of Republics and Tyrants: Aspects of *Quattrocento* Humanist Writings and their Reception in England, c. 1400–c. 1460’ (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 1997), discussed below, Part One, chapter one, pp. 12–13.

⁶ EVEREST-PHILLIPS, L.C.Y., ‘The Patronage of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. A Re-evaluation’ (York Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1983); Rossi, S., ‘Enrico V dalla cronaca alla poesia’, in id., *Ricerche sull’Umanesimo e sul Rinascimento in Inghilterra* (Milan, 1969), pp. 1–26.

with one another. Such an approach liberates Gloucester and the Italian humanists from the one-dimensional roles, respectively of active patron and passive client, which they have hitherto been assigned, and permits us to consider these men both as pawns and as players in the process of cultural transmission. Moreover, it brings to the fore the importance of the middlemen in this process.

The inquiry departs from the hypothesis that the primary stimulus for the contacts between Gloucester, his middlemen and the Italian humanists were interests that originated in the political, dynastic and/or professional ambitions of the men concerned. The argument hopes to avoid crude materialism; instead it aims to demonstrate the immediate interrelation between the literary interests of the men concerned and their non-literary ambitions. Consequently, the study of the literary activity of Gloucester, his middlemen and the Italian humanists interlocks with an examination of its social and political context.

Part One integrates Gloucester's activity as a literary patron with his biography as one of the most prominent figures in English politics from 1422 until his death in 1447. Part Two reconstructs the dynastic and personal ambitions that provided the motivation for Zanone da Castiglione, the Italian bishop of Bayeux in Lancastrian Normandy, and Piero da Monte, the papal collector in England, during the late 1430s to act as mediators between Gloucester and the humanist community in Italy. Part Three, finally, is concerned with the professional situation of the humanists who sought patronage and/or employment in England between 1420 and 1450.

Each of these sections forms a whole in itself. This does not mean, however, that they are independent of each other; on the contrary. As the frequent cross-references indicate, the three parts are closely interrelated and build on each other. This explains why the first section is considerably longer than the two subsequent parts and contains many historical and political details that may at first sight not seem to have any direct bearing on the transmission of humanism to England: the broad panorama developed in this opening section not only serves to set Gloucester's action into context, but also provides the backdrop for the discussion of the middlemen and the humanists in the parts that follow.

The aim is to show that Gloucester, his middlemen and the Italian humanists did not, as has previously been assumed, perceive their interest in the language and thought of classical antiquity as a hobby

that was extraneous to their lives as statesmen, diplomats, professional clerks, or pedagogues. Instead it formed an integral and essential part of their biographies that was immediately interrelated with their public action. By adopting an approach that takes into account this dynamic interaction, the present study hopes not only to offer a new interpretation of the transmission of humanism to England in the early fifteenth century, but also to make a contribution to the understanding of some of the causes of the triumphant advance of Italian Renaissance humanism in fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe and its pervasive influence on Western culture.

PART ONE

AN ACTIVE LIFE. HUMPHREY,
DUKE OF GLOUCESTER AS A LITERARY
PATRON AND MAN OF POLITICS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, the youngest brother of Henry V, could be cast as the ideal Renaissance prince: not only was he one of the earliest and most important patrons of humanism north of the Alps but, between 1422 and 1445, the duke also played an important role in English politics. During the minority of his nephew, Henry VI, Gloucester acted as protector of the realm. Between 1429 and 1432 he officiated as *custos Anglie* while the young king was on his coronation expedition to France. In 1436, Gloucester led an English military expedition to Flanders; and he continued to play a prominent role in English politics until the early 1440s, when the rise of the court coterie around William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, inaugurated his eclipse.

Hitherto, the duke's career in politics and his role as patron of humanism have been studied in isolation. This separation between the two aspects of his biography was established in the nineteenth century. Focusing exclusively on Gloucester's political career, William Stubbs, in his *Constitutional History*, presented the duke as an unscrupulous partisan of royal absolutism and denounced him as the "evil genius of the house of Lancaster", whose selfish ambition had prepared the ground for the Wars of the Roses and the ultimate ruin of the Lancastrian dynasty.¹

Some thirty years later, Gloucester's modern biographer, K.H. Vickers, tried to correct Stubbs's portrait of the duke. Himself strongly indebted to the Whig interpretation of history, Vickers was unable to challenge Stubbs's verdict on Gloucester's political abilities. Observations such as "[Gloucester's] ruling passion was ambition, but he did not know how to satisfy it. Thus his . . . life [was] governed by one overwhelming desire, but totally inconsistent in detail" are, therefore, typical of Vickers's assessment of Gloucester's political

¹ STUBBS, W., *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development* (3 vols., Oxford, ³1880), iii, 102 and 101-149, *passim*.

career.² Still, anxious to present a balanced account, Vickers complemented his reconstruction of the duke's action in politics with a laudatory description of his cultural pursuits that culminated in the assertion:

[Gloucester] had done nothing to carry England further along the highroad to strength and fame . . . Yet his life was not in vain. No man has left a greater mark on the progress of English thought than this Duke Humphrey, and in the realm of ideas. He did the good work he failed to do in the realm of action.³

Writing in the wake of Jacob Burckhardt and Georg Voigt, Vickers tacitly subscribed to the notion of the inherent superiority of the Italian Renaissance over the cultural achievements of northern Europe. Therefore, he touched only briefly on Gloucester's contacts with English authors such as John Lydgate, concentrating instead on the celebration of the duke's patronage of Italian humanists.⁴ This differentiation between Gloucester's 'backward' indebtedness to the supposedly outlived traditions of northern Europe and his 'progressive' reception of the new, Italian, school, led to a fragmentation in the perception of Gloucester's literary patronage, while the counterposition of the duke's alleged failure in politics with his meritorious cultural activity implied a separation between the spheres of culture and politics which cut off Gloucester's literary patronage from its political context.

Vickers's depoliticised and Italo-centric view of Gloucester's literary interests set the tone for subsequent studies of the duke's cultural exploits. Yet where Vickers had presented his patronage of Italian humanism as proof of Gloucester's connoisseurship, later scholars adopted a dismissive attitude towards the duke's cultural achievement.⁵ Departing from an idealised definition of Italian Renaissance humanism as the quest for enlightenment through the learning and aesthetics of classical antiquity, the studies of Walter Schirmer and Roberto Weiss took the purportedly inferior literary quality of some of the works produced in Gloucester's circle as a mark of the duke's lack of intellectual discernment. Consequently, they viewed Gloucester's patronage of humanism as barely more than an accumulation of

² VICKERS, K.H., *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester* (London, 1907), p. 124.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 341–425, the quote is on p. 339; see also pp. 424–5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 343–4.

⁵ SCHIRMER, pp. 19–51; WEISS, pp. 39–70.

knowledge, the full significance of which allegedly escaped the duke.⁶ References to Gloucester's role in politics in texts that were commissioned by or dedicated to him, were interpreted as an indication of the duke's purely utilitarian interest in the new learning, which allegedly reduced the work of the humanists to mere exercises in propaganda and panegyric and testified to Gloucester's vain desire to emulate the model of Italian Renaissance princes such as Federigo da Montefeltro or Alfonso of Aragon.⁷ Meanwhile, the humanists' complaints about their inadequate remuneration by Gloucester were seen as confirmation of the duke's lack of culture and of his inability to acknowledge the value of the literary work undertaken in his service.⁸

The works of Schirmer and Weiss have had lasting influence on the interpretation of Gloucester's role as literary patron, as is exemplified in Derek Pearsall's indictment of 1970:

So much has been written of Humphrey as a patron of letters that one is in danger of rating him too highly, as a dedicated lover of classical learning, instead of what he was, an erratic, unprincipled and attractively unsuccessful politician who dabbled in letters partly because he saw in them a way to prestige and profit.⁹

Under the influence of P.O. Kristeller's pioneering work on Italian Renaissance humanism, however, a more pragmatic definition of humanism than that employed by Schirmer and Weiss has, in the past two decades, been established in Renaissance scholarship. Less italo-centric explanatory models of the transmission of humanism to northern Europe have been developed; and the complex functions of cultural patronage have become the subject of specialist studies.¹⁰

⁶ For their respective definitions of humanism see SCHIRMER, p. 1; WEISS, pp. 1-4. On Gloucester's alleged lack of connoisseurship SCHIRMER, pp. 30-31, pp. 49-51; WEISS, pp. 68-9.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 42-3, 69; SCHIRMER, pp. 32-3, pp. 49-51.

⁸ WEISS, pp. 59-60.

⁹ PEARSALL, D., *John Lydgate* (London, 1970), p. 224. Compare also the introduction to Alfredo Sammut's invaluable edition of Gloucester's literary correspondence and the inventories of the his donations to Oxford, SAMMUT, A., *Unfredo Duca di Gloucester e gli Umanisti Italiani* (Padua, 1980), which presents an account of Gloucester's literary patronage that differed only in minor details from Weiss's interpretation.

¹⁰ See e.g. KRISTELLER, op.cit.; RABIL, A. Jr. (ed.), *Renaissance Humanism. Foundations, Forms and Legacy* (3 vols., Philadelphia, Pa., 1988); GRAFTON, A., 'Introduction: Notes from Underground on Cultural Transmission', in GRAFTON, A./BLAIR, A. (eds.), *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia, 1990), pp. 1-7; BURKE, P., 'The Spread of Italian Humanism', in GOODMAN, A./MACKAY, A. (eds.), *The Impact*

Criticism of Schirmer and Weiss and calls for new approaches have, therefore, become customary in recent studies of Gloucester's cultural pursuits. Closer scrutiny of these works reveals, however, that the preconceptions which Schirmer and Weiss put into circulation continue to inform the discussion.

L.C.Y. Everest-Phillips's 1983 doctoral thesis on Gloucester's literary patronage charted new territory by studying the duke's encouragement of English authors alongside his contacts with Italian humanists.¹¹ Moreover, arguing that literary patronage was "second nature to men of . . . Gloucester's rank and particular upbringing" and citing examples of his active influence on the selection, composition and external design of the texts that were produced for him, Everest-Phillips re-accorded to Gloucester a high degree of connoisseurship. The conclusion, however, that the duke's patronage of English and Italian authors was, even in its idiosyncrasies, but a typical example of aristocratic self-fashioning, obscured the specificity of Gloucester's action, and offered little advance on Schirmer's and Weiss's thesis that the duke had been driven by a vainglorious desire for self-aggrandisement.

David Rundle took up Everest-Phillips view when he proposed in his 1997 doctoral thesis on aspects of humanist writings and their reception in England between 1400 and 1460 that the main inspiration for Gloucester's literary patronage had been the general desire of contemporary rulers to style themselves as philosopher-princes. By contrast to Everest-Phillips, however, Rundle asserted that the duke had little actual understanding of or interest in the texts he patronised; rather, Rundle argued, Gloucester's patronage was defined by the humanists who addressed him because they saw in the English duke an ideal accessory in their attempts to style themselves as advisors to princes. Rundle's work is important because it highlights the contribution of humanist action to Gloucester's patronage. Moreover,

of *Humanism on Western Europe* (London, 1990), pp. 1–20, id., 'The Uses of Italy', in PORTER, R./TEICH, M. (eds.), *The Renaissance in National Context* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 6–20; KOHLS, B.G., 'The changing concept of the *studia humanitatis* in the early Renaissance', *Renaissance Studies*, vi (1992), 185–209; LYTLE, G.F./ORGEL, S. (eds.), *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ., 1981); KENT, F.W./SIMONS, P. (eds.), *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 1987), and, most recently, the introduction to KENT, D.V., *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance. The Patron's Œuvre* (New Haven, London/2000). Compare also the introduction to Part Three of the present study.

¹¹ EVEREST-PHILLIPS, 'Patronage of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester'.

Rundle draws attention to less high-profile adepts of the *studia humanitatis* in England beside Gloucester during the first half of the fifteenth century. Most important, however, Rundle offers a detailed codicological discussion of surviving humanist manuscripts that had circulated in England during that period. Rundle's meticulous groundwork provides an invaluable research tool for subsequent scholars working on the transmission and reception of humanism in England. Yet, as with Everest-Phillips, it is hard to discern the actual difference between Rundle's idea of interlocking concepts of self-fashioning and Weiss's and Schirmer's thesis of Gloucester's desire for self-aggrandisement and the humanists' interest in profit and self-advertisement. Although Rundle proposes that the principal motivation of humanists to style themselves as advisors to princes was the desire to conceal their concrete material interests, he treats these material concerns only in a cursory fashion and concentrates instead on analysing the rhetorical strategies the humanists allegedly employed to sublimate the conflict between subservience to powerful patrons and their desire for intellectual independence. Likewise, Rundle acknowledges that Gloucester's literary patronage might have been coupled with his political interests; yet avoids to establish any but the most general connections between the duke's literary interests and the political background.¹²

Meanwhile, the broader aims of Gloucester's political career have continued to elude scholarly explanation. In the 1950s, K.B. McFarlane's work on 'bastard feudalism' initiated the supersession of Stubbs's constitutional model by the concept of the patronage nexus as the deep structure of the fifteenth century English polity.¹³ While the majority of the studies that have been published in McFarlane's wake were concerned with the workings of political patronage in the locality, the analyses of Henry VI's reign by Ralph Griffiths and Bertram

¹² RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants'; id., 'On the Difference between Virtue and Weiss: Humanist Texts in England during the Fifteenth Century', DUNN, D.E.S. (ed.), *Courts, Courtiers and the Capital in the Later Middle Ages* (Fifteenth Century Series, iv, Stroud, New York, 1996), pp. 181–203; id., 'Two Unnoticed Manuscripts from the Collection of Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester: Part I', *Bodleian Library Record*, xvi (1998), 211–23.

¹³ MCFARLANE, K.B., *England in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981). For critical appraisals of MCFARLANE's impact on scholarship see RICHMOND, C., 'After McFarlane', *History*, lxxviii (1983), 46–60 and BRITNELL, R.H./POLLARD, A.J. (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy. Studies in Late Medieval Politics and Society* (Fifteenth Century Series, i, Stroud and New York, 1995).

Wolffe and Gerald Harriss's biography of Henry Beaufort have examined the role of political networks at the centre of government.¹⁴ Yet, focusing on the action of the central directors of government, Griffiths, Wolffe and Harriss have accorded Gloucester, who always remained an eccentric figure in English politics, only a marginal role in their investigations. R.H. Thomas's 1985 doctoral thesis on Gloucester's career and policy contains some useful information on the duke's financial situation and his potential allies; yet, predominantly an elegant synthesis of the existing secondary literature, Thomas's work offers few original insights into the duke's role in politics and even less a systematic reconstruction of Gloucester's affinity and political influence.¹⁵ As a result of this neglect, the duke's image as a politician has remained largely unchanged since the days of Stubbs and Vickers, and Gloucester's action continues to be described as erratic and dictated by personal rather than political motives.¹⁶ If the duke's literary patronage is mentioned at all in the discussions of his political career, it is with reference to its putative propagandistic character.¹⁷

This disregard for Gloucester's cultural pursuits by political historians is typical of an overemphasis on the role of political and dynastic considerations as mainsprings of action that characterises the approach of some of the most influential scholars of fifteenth century politics.¹⁸ During the past decade historians have begun to voice

¹⁴ For studies of patronage in the locality see e.g. BENNETT, M.J., *Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'* (Cambridge, 1983); CARPENTER, C., *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499* (Cambridge, 1992); MADDERN, P.C., *Violence and Social Order. East Anglia, 1422-1442* (Oxford, 1992); GRIFFITHS, R.A., *The Reign of King Henry VI* (London, 1981) (unless otherwise marked, all further references to GRIFFITHS concern this work); WOLFFE, B., *Henry VI* (London, 1981); HARRISS, G.L., *Cardinal Henry Beaufort. A Study of Lancastrian Ascendancy and Decline* (Oxford, 1988) (unless otherwise marked, all further references to HARRISS concern this work).

¹⁵ THOMAS, R.H., 'The Career and Policy of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, 1390-1447' (Columbia Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1985).

¹⁶ Compare Griffiths's characterisation of the duke as "unsteady", "power-seeking", "proud", "imperious", "stubborn", GRIFFITHS, p. 19, p. 53, p. 75, p. 78, p. 236 and Harriss's description of Gloucester as "volatile, ineffective and lacking in commitment to the war in France", as resorting to "cheap demagoguery", "inept" and "lacking in personality", HARRISS, p. 136, pp. 236-7, p. 255. Wolffe's judgement is generally more neutral, WOLFFE, pp. 131-2 and *passim*.

¹⁷ GRIFFITHS, pp. 217-28.

¹⁸ E.g. LANDER, J.R., 'Family, "Friends" and Politics in Fifteenth-century England', in GRIFFITHS, R.A./SHERBORNE, J. (eds.), *Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages* (Gloucester, 1986), pp. 27-40, at p. 37: "Until the reformation introduced for the first time an ideological element into English politics, on the whole they revolved

their mounting discontent with this fixation on the material working of political patronage, calling for a return to the investigation of the political culture, the terms and currency of political action and beliefs and their dynamic interplay with the working of public institutions.¹⁹ One of the leading proponents of this 'new constitutional history' is John Watts. His study, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (1996), focuses on the connection between fifteenth century conceptions of kingship and aristocratic participation in government and the evolution of consensual strategies in response to Henry VI's long minority and his ensuing passivity as a king.²⁰ Gloucester's steadfast and increasingly isolated opposition to the distribution of power during the minority and early reign of Henry VI, posed a constant threat to the fragile political consensus; therefore, the duke plays only a subordinate role in Watts' examination. Yet Watts' programmatic statement that

Ideas influence politics because in order to promote and defend their activities in a particular public environment, politicians are forced to explain themselves with reference to its 'accepted principles', and this consideration, in turn, shapes their behaviour. This means that it is actually essential for historians to explore both these principles and the rhetorical processes through which politicians seek to invoke them in order to explain the politics in which they are engaged. Rhetoric does not have to reflect the true feelings of its exponents to be effective, nor—of course—does it have to present the 'truth'. To achieve its impact, it has to intersect with other rhetoric and with those schemes of publicly recognised values which dominate the organisation, and thus the understanding of, experience in a given society.²¹

around the personal relationships between the monarchy and a number of great families, and at a lower level between these great families and their followers"; and Griffiths's book review, GRIFFITHS, R.A., 'Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship by John Watts', *EHR*, cxiii (1998), 685–7.

¹⁹ E.g. HICKS, M., 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, New York, 1990), pp. x–xxii; POWELL, E., 'After McFarlane: The Poverty of Patronage and the Case for Constitutional History', in CLAYTON, D.J./DAVIES, R.G. (eds.), *Trade, Devotion and Governance: Papers in Later Medieval History* (Stroud, 1994), pp. 1–16; CARPENTER, C., 'Political and Constitutional History: Before and After McFarlane', in BRITNELL, R.H./POLLARD, A.J. (eds.), *McFarlane Legacy*, pp. 175–206 and id., *The Wars of the Roses. Politics and the Constitution in England c. 1437–1509* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 4–26.

²⁰ WATTS, J., *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge, ¹1996, ²1999) (unless otherwise marked, all further references to WATTS concern this work).

²¹ Id., 'Polemic and Politics in the 1450s', in KEKEWICH, M.L./RICHMOND, C./SUTTON, A.F. et al. (eds.), *The Politics of Fifteenth Century England. John Vale's Book* (Stroud, 1995), pp. 3–42, at pp. 5–6.

furnished the starting point for the present investigation, which aims explicitly to correlate Gloucester's career in politics with his activity as a literary patron. Such an integrative approach makes it possible to establish lines of continuity in the duke's political conduct and to define the specific nature of his literary patronage. Proceeding chronologically, the analysis focuses on recurrent themes in Gloucester's action in the spheres of culture and politics from 1422 until the duke's death in 1447. It tries to retrace the evolution of these recurrent motifs and examines their interlocking with each other and with other dominant themes in English politics and culture during this period.

The sources for this examination are subdivided into two categories. The first comprises evidence that directly emanated from Gloucester. This includes the duke's public statements before parliament and council, his correspondence with Italian humanists, and the literary works that were composed or translated at Gloucester's initiative; in particular John Lydgate's *Serpent of Division* (1425?) and the same author's *Fall of Princes* (1431–1439), Leonardo Bruni's translation of Aristotle's *Politics* (1433?–1438), and Tito Livio Frulovisi's *Vita Henrici Quinti* and its companion-piece, the *Humfroidos* (both written in 1436/7). The other category comprises second hand accounts of Gloucester's action. Besides parliamentary records, council deliberations and the inventories of the libraries that benefited from Gloucester's patronage, semi-documentary evidence, such as detailed diplomatic dispatches by French and curial ambassadors at the English court, narrative sources like contemporary English chronicles, and literary works that were not commissioned by the duke but written in his immediate environment, such as Piero da Monte's treatise *De Vitorum et Virtutum Differentia inter se* (1438) and the collector's contribution to the Scipio/Caesar controversy between Guarino da Verona and Poggio Bracciolini (1440).²²

From this list, it is evident that the present investigation aims to tear down the artificial barrier between Gloucester's political action and his cultural patronage and that it disregards the established differentiation between the duke's employment of English authors

²² Texts that were sent to the duke by Italian humanists without his prior request, are excluded from the investigation. Reflections on the expectations of the humanists rather than reliable statements on Gloucester's action, they are treated in the third section of this study, which aims to reconstruct the humanists' motivation for their wish to win the duke's patronage.

and his contacts with Italian humanists. The aim is to show that Gloucester's acts in the spheres of politics and culture and his parallel patronage of English authors and Italian humanists were not, as Vickers postulated, mutually independent aspects of the duke's career and cultural pursuits. Instead, they stood in a dialectic relationship to each other. A reconstruction that manages to delineate the way in which these seemingly heterogeneous facets of Gloucester's action reflected and reinforced each other, will make it possible to elucidate the driving forces behind the duke's biography. To reach this point of understanding is the ambition of the following investigation.

CHAPTER TWO

HENRY V'S PROVISIONS FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF ENGLAND OF 1421/22 AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONCILIAR RULE IN 1422. A TENTATIVE RE-READING

The political action of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, is frequently described as incoherent and unmotivated. It is, therefore, all the more important to focus on central themes in his career, whose analysis may provide guidelines for the synthesis of the seemingly disparate elements of the duke's biography into a meaningful narrative. One of these central themes was Gloucester's claim to the *tutela* of Henry VI.*

In August 1422 the dying Henry V had charged Gloucester, who was then serving as *custos Anglie* in the king's absence in France, with the *tutela et defensio* of his nine-month-old heir, Henry VI. On the basis of this provision, which was laid down in a codicil to Henry V's testament, Gloucester had, in the aftermath of his brother's death, demanded his installation as regent during his nephew's prolonged minority. In winter 1422 this claim was refuted by the lords in parliament. Arguing that the civil law term *tutela* was incompatible with English law, they entrusted the governance of the realm to a representative council; Gloucester was granted no more than the limited authority of a protector.

Resistance to this settlement became a central feature of Gloucester's policy in the ensuing two decades. During the minority, Gloucester invoked his commission with the *tutela* to legitimise his bid for pre-eminence in the realm; at the beginning of Henry VI's reign, the duke interpreted what he believed to be the intentions behind the

* This chapter has very much benefited from the advice and criticism of Dr. John Watts, whose insightful comments on early drafts of this chapter contributed significantly to the formulation and clarification of the argument. The present version of the text has, moreover, greatly profited from the careful reading and constructive criticism of Dr. Maurice Keen. I would like to thank both scholars for their support and generosity. For the chapter's remaining weaknesses and errors, no one but myself can be held responsible.

tutela-clause to designate his own responsibility for the enforcement of the young king's personal rule and the protection of Lancastrian interests. His reading of his claim to the *tutela*, and the role it shaped for him with his nephew, informed Gloucester's policy well into the 1440s.

The present chapter considers Henry V's deathbed provisions and the events leading to the establishment of conciliar government in order to provide the background that will explain why it was that Gloucester's understanding of the implications of the *tutela*-commission for his position in the kingdom while Henry VI was under age, and after that too, were central to his political action and cultural patronage between 1422 and 1447.

Henry V's provisions for the governance of England were believed to have been lost and their content was for a long time a matter of conjecture. The most influential discussion of Henry V's putative provisions for the governance of England and the events that led to the establishment of conciliar government in 1422 is J.S. Roskell's masterful reconstruction of 1953.¹ Basing his speculation on indirect evidence in the contemporary sources, Roskell proposed the following sequence of events:

When Henry V left England in June 1421 for what would prove his last campaign in France, he was aware that his queen, Catherine of Valois, was pregnant. Regardless of its sex, this child would have had a claim to the thrones of England and France; it represented thus the embodiment of the territorial and dynastic ambitions which Henry V had so vigorously pursued since the early 1410s. In the summer of 1421, the victor of Agincourt was still only in his early thirties and he may not have been unduly worried about his own death; nonetheless, he must have been aware that, should he die in the field, his yet unborn heir would face a prolonged minority.

By contrast to continental practice, it had become customary in England, in the case of a royal minority to entrust the governance of the realm not to a regent, but to a representative council.² Yet

¹ ROSKELL, J.S., 'The Office and Dignity of Protector of England, with Special Reference to its Origins', *EHR*, lxxviii (1953), 193-233.

² The relevant precedents were the royal minorities of Edward III (1327-1330) and of Richard II (1377-80). The minority of Henry III and the installation of a council under William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke (1216-1219), was, as I shall explain below, less clear.

late medieval English politics were king-centred; prolonged conciliar government carried, therefore, the danger of either anarchy or the emergence of a new strong man at the centre.³ Either scenario could have jeopardised the claims of Henry V's heir to the throne. Consequently, according to Roskell's interpretation, Henry V in 1421, either in his substantive testament or in a codicil, charged his youngest brother, Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, with the *tutela et defensio* of his yet unborn heir in the case of his death.

A concept of Roman property law, the term *tutela* denoted the guardianship of a male below the age of puberty by the appointment of a tutor, who acted as a controller of the minor's property during the latter's legal incapacity. Henry V's putative hope by his recourse to this civil law concept to be able to circumvent English custom and to install Gloucester as his regent in the case of his death, was, however, disappointed. In August 1422, some eight months after the birth of his heir, Henry of Windsor, the king unexpectedly succumbed to a fatal illness. At the reading of his testament on 7 November 1422, Roskell proposed, the lords then present initially sanctioned Gloucester's claim to the *tutela* for the term of Henry VI's minority; yet within days doubts arose concerning the legitimacy of Henry V's testamentary provision and by early December the lords in parliament found that the late king's attempt to install a regent was incompatible with English custom. Despite Gloucester's protests, the duke and his brother Bedford were granted only the limited prerogatives of protectors of the realm, while the responsibility for the governance of England during the minority was entrusted to a representative council.

Roskell presented the events of 1421/2 primarily as an example of the way in which outside pressure (Henry V's intention to install a regency, Gloucester's attempt to implement his brother's provisions) led to the explicit formulation of constitutional principle by the lords and parliament. Accordingly, Roskell did not consider Gloucester's view of the events in any detail.

In 1978, a copy of Henry V's testament and last will (*ultima voluntas*) was discovered at Eton College.⁴ As Roskell had surmised, this

³ For a discussion of the king-centred conception of politics in late medieval England and the role of the council in government see WATTS, *Henry VI*, pp. 13–101.

⁴ Edited by STRONG, P./STRONG, F., 'The Last Will and Codicils of Henry V', *EHR*, xcvi (1981), 79–102.

document contained a codicil in which Henry V decreed "quod carissimus frater noster Humfridus dux Gloucester habeat tutelam et defensionem nostri carissimi filii principales".⁵ Yet, whereas Roskell had assumed that this *passus* had been added to the testament in June 1421, the codicil was dated 26 August 1422, that is, it had been formulated only five days before the king's death.⁶

R.A. Griffiths and B. Wolffe have, therefore, suggested that Henry V had previously failed to make arrangements for the governance of his English dominion in the event of his death and that on 26 August he added the *tutela*-clause in a desperate bid to compensate for his earlier neglect and as an improvised attempt to protect his infant son's hold to the throne.⁷ G.L. Harriss and C.T. Allmand, on the other hand, have argued that the *tutela*-clause did not refer to the form government should take after Henry V's death, but that it related solely to the custody of the infant Henry VI and his personal effects.⁸ In their interpretation of the events that led up to the establishment of conciliar government all four scholars followed Roskell. They proposed that the codicil of 26 August had proved insufficient to ensure Gloucester's installation as regent, because its civil law terminology was bound to meet with the determined resistance of the magnates. The duke's insistence on his title to the *tutela* has been cast either as a mark of his presumptuousness or as an indication of Gloucester's somewhat pathetic unwillingness to accept that he was the loser in a rough game.⁹

The following investigation makes no pretence of being a detailed revision of the established account of Henry V's deathbed provisions and of the events surrounding the settlement of 1422; instead it draws attention to inconsistencies in the existing accounts and proposes an outline for a new reading of the existing evidence. The aim is to show that Gloucester's insistence on his claim to the *tutela* was not, as has previously been maintained, a mark of the duke's personal greed for power or of his failure to abide by constitutional principle, but a desperate attempt to fulfil what he perceived to be Henry

⁵ Ibid., p. 99.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ GRIFFITHS, pp. 16–20; WOLFFE, pp. 28–9.

⁸ ALLMAND, C.T., *Henry V* (London, 1982), p. 172; HARRISS, *Cardinal Beaufort*, p. 115.

⁹ Ibid., p. 31, p. 116; GRIFFITHS, pp. 19–20. Compare also JACOB, E.F., *The Fifteenth Century 1399–1485* (Oxford, 1961), p. 211; THOMAS, pp. 46–50.

V's dying wishes, after an unfortunate sequence of events had thrust the responsibility for the Lancastrian kingship in England into his hands. It is here proposed that when this attempt, for reasons that were largely outside Gloucester's control, failed late in 1422, the duke was left with a sense of grievance that was to inform his political action in the subsequent three decades.

Two suppositions form the point of departure for this proposed re-reading: firstly, with Roskell, Griffiths and Wolffe, and pace Allmand and Harriss, it is assumed that the dying Henry V did indeed try to make arrangements for the governance of England after his death and during the minority of his heir, Henry VI. Second, it is proposed that rather than the politically relatively inexperienced Gloucester, his elder brother, the heir presumptive, John, duke of Bedford (1389–1435), would have presented himself as the most obvious administrator of Henry V's political legacy during a royal minority.¹⁰ By the early 1420s Bedford had accumulated broad military and administrative experience in England, and his re-appointment as *custos Anglie* upon Henry V's departure for France in the summer of 1421 would have enabled him further to consolidate his good working relations with the leading representatives of the Lancastrian polity. Moreover, unlike his elder brother, Thomas, duke of Clarence, who had died in March 1421, Bedford had never given Henry V cause to doubt his loyalty.¹¹ With respect to Bedford's qualities, in view of the fact that in the summer of 1421 Henry V must have been aware that his queen was with child, and taking into consideration that on all previous occasions when he had set out for France the king had made comprehensive testamentary provisions, it seems, therefore, conceivable that when he left England for the last time in June 1421, Henry V—possibly in a codicil to his testament of June 1421—arranged for the extension of Bedford's prerogatives as *custos Anglie* and his appointment as protector of the Lancastrian line on

¹⁰ A member of Henry V's royal council from the mid 1410s onward, Gloucester participated in his brother's campaigns in France of 1415, 1417 and 1421; between 1417 and 1419, the duke served in several administrative and diplomatic functions; between January 1420 and February 1421, and again from May to August 1422, he officiated as lieutenant of the realm in Henry V's absence. For a concise description of the duke's career prior to 1422 compare, Tout, T.F., 'Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester', *Dictionary of National Biography*, x (London, 1908), 238–45, at pp. 238–39.

¹¹ For Bedford's political record until 1422 compare WILLIAMS, E.C., *My Lord of Bedford, 1389–1435* (London, 1963), pp. 16–53.

the English throne in the case of his own death and an ensuing royal minority.¹²

If such a provision existed, it has not survived and, in any case, by the time Henry V lay dying in August 1422, it would no longer have had much practical use, for by that time, Bedford no longer officiated as *custos Anglie*. In May 1422 the elder duke had, at Henry V's command, joined the king in France after he had ceded the English lieutenancy to Gloucester.¹³ The reasons for this exchange of the dukes are unclear. Perhaps Henry V intended to return to England in the late summer of 1422 and had planned to appoint Bedford as his regent in Lancastrian France during his absence. In that case, it would have been expedient to give the elder duke time, under the guidance of the king, to acquaint himself with the situation in the occupied territories. During that interim period, and until Henry V returned to England, Gloucester, who had previously held that position from late 1419 to early 1421, could safely be entrusted with the lieutenancy of the English realm.

When Bedford arrived in France early in May 1422 Henry V may already have been unwell; yet the seriousness of his illness seems to have become apparent only a fortnight later. By the end of June, the king's physicians despaired of his recovery; still the languishing king apparently clung to the hope of his convalescence for almost another month, and seems to have acknowledged that he was on the brink of death only some time during the first half of August.¹⁴ At that point, it would have been too late to effectuate another exchange between Bedford and Gloucester, and it must have become clear that after Henry V's death the elder duke would have to represent English interests in Normandy and France, while it would fall to Gloucester to protect the house of Lancaster in England during the minority of Henry of Windsor. It is here proposed that if he had not done so at an earlier date, Henry V, at the latest at this juncture, devised a provision for the governance of England after his death by investing Gloucester with the *tutela et defensio* of his infant heir.

¹² For Henry V's testamentary provisions prior to 1421 see STRONG/STRONG, pp. 80–81. For Bedford's commission as *custos Anglie* see *Foedera, Conventiones, et Litterae*, ed. T. RYMER (20 vols., London, 1727–35), iv, 4, p. 33.

¹³ WOLFFE, p. 30.

¹⁴ ALLMAND, pp. 170–71.

If this sequence of events is accepted, it would imply that the responsibility for the defence of the Lancastrian kingship in England devolved on Gloucester accidentally because he, rather than his elder brother Bedford, happened to be in England at the time of Henry V's death. In the late summer of 1422 it fell, therefore, to the politically inexperienced younger duke to realise what may have been Henry V's ambitious scheme for the installation of a regency, and the evidence suggests that at least for a fleeting moment Gloucester's endeavours met with some measure of success.

Hitherto it has been assumed that if Henry V had intended to circumvent English custom and appoint Gloucester as regent during the minority of his heir, such a scheme had met with the immediate and determined resistance of the lords and parliament. This interpretation is based on Roskell's tentative reconstruction of the events leading up to the settlement of December 1422. Roskell had surmised that Gloucester's statement of December 1422 that at an earlier date the *tutela*-clause in the codicil to Henry V's testament had been "redde declared and assented bi all the lordis etc.", had referred to the reading of Henry V's will before the council on 7 November 1422. Since the first resistance began to form against Gloucester's claim to the *tutela* as early as 9 November, Roskell deduced that the constitutional reaction against Henry V's provisions set in almost immediately.¹⁵

The scenario proposed by Roskell is, however, not confirmed by the evidence: a confrontation of the testimony concerning the will-reading of 7 November 1422 with the Eton-copy of Henry V's will and codicil shows that the codicil presented to the lords on 7 November, was not the codicil of 26 August 1422, which contained the all-important *tutela*-provision in Gloucester's favour, but another codicil, dated 9 June 1421, whose tenor is unknown.¹⁶ Consequently, the council's acceptance of the codicil of 26 August 1422 mentioned by Gloucester must have taken place at another date. The mounting resistance to a regency after 9 November makes it unlikely that the *tutela*-clause would have found conciliar approval at any date

¹⁵ CHRIMES, S.B., 'The Pretensions of the Duke of Gloucester in 1422', *EHR*, xlv (1930), 101-3, p. 102; ROSKELL, pp. 207-17.

¹⁶ STRONG/STRONG, p. 81. For the will-reading and the codicil of 9 June 1421 compare *Rotuli Parliamentorum* (6 vols., London, 1767-77), forthwith cited as *R.P.*, iv, 299-300; only the opening and closing line of this earlier codicil are known.

after the first week of November; therefore, the codicil of 26 August must have been sanctioned by the council before 7 November 1422.¹⁷ No such action is reported in the records of the first meeting of the great council after Henry V's death on 5 November 1422, and the dissension between the lords and Gloucester over the duke's prerogative as parliamentary lieutenant, which arose during that meeting, make it improbable that on the same occasion the councillors should have recognised Gloucester's title to the *tutela*.¹⁸

It is, therefore, here proposed that Gloucester's statement referred to the emergency meeting of the rump council in England which convened on 28 September in response to the news of Henry V's death in France. The attendants at this meeting were predominantly ecclesiastical lords, whose familiarity with canon law may have made them more amenable to the Roman terminology of Henry V's deathbed provisions than their lay peers, who joined the council only on 5 November 1422.¹⁹ Besides, shocked by the news of Henry V's unexpected death, these councillors may have perceived a legally sanctioned regency under Gloucester's leadership as the best solution to the immediate political crisis created by the vacuum of power at the head of government.²⁰

The men who met on 28 September were not representative of the English great council, and their acceptance of Gloucester's role of *tutor* may never have been more than a provisional agreement until parliamentary assent could be had for a permanent settlement of the governance of the realm during the minority of Henry VI. Still, Gloucester may have felt that he had crossed the first hurdle in the implementation of what might have been his late brother's scheme for the safeguarding of the Lancastrian kingship in England. As the next step the duke needed to win the consent of the great council and parliament.

¹⁷ For the events of 9 November compare ROSKELL, pp. 207–10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 197–9.

¹⁹ The respective composition of the assemblies of 28 September and of 5 and 7 November is discussed by GRIFFITHS, pp. 15–6, pp. 21–22.

²⁰ Such an informal settlement would explain, why Gloucester could legitimately have been under the impression that he had been accorded the prerogative of a regent under the terms of the codicil of 26 August 1422, even though this status was neither echoed in government documents nor officially sanctioned. Something along those lines was already suggested by ROSKELL, pp. 216–7; without the evidence of Henry V's testament, he was, however, unable to establish the sequence of events.

Gloucester never managed to secure that authorisation. His failure may have been precipitated by strategic errors on his part and by a gradual resurgence of constitutional sentiment in English political society.²¹ Yet it is here proposed that the principal cause for the ultimate refutation of the *tutela*-clause was Bedford's rival claim to the governance of England during the minority. The elder duke may have doubted Gloucester's competence to protect the Lancastrian house in England during the long minority of their nephew. Moreover, Bedford may have been aware that this responsibility had fallen to Gloucester only accidentally and, perhaps, the elder of the brothers royal felt that this accident had deprived him of what he may have perceived as his natural prerogative as heir presumptive.

Writing from Rouen late in October 1422, Bedford reminded the political representatives in England of his status as heir presumptive and implored them not to accept provisions that were incompatible with English "lawes and usage".²² Bedford's intervention was ill-advised; for even if the great council and parliament had recognised his claim to the "gouvernance of the Reaume of England", the elder duke would not have been in the country to assert his prerogative. Meanwhile, his challenge to Gloucester's title had raised questions about the legitimacy of a regency in general, thus strengthening those forces in England which opposed the idea of a minority government under Lancastrian command.²³

The swift erosion of Gloucester's authority in the aftermath of Bedford's intervention became first apparent during the council meeting of 5 November.²⁴ Two days later, the younger duke had appar-

²¹ Ibid., pp. 198–9.

²² SHARPE, R.R. (ed.), *London and the Kingdom* (3 vols. London, 1894–5), iii, 367–8, "... during the tendre age of the king our souverain lord that is now the governance of the Reaume of England after the lawes and ancien usage and custume of the same Reaume as we be enfourmed belongeth un to us as to the elder brother of our said souverain lord that was and next unto the courone of England and havynge chief interesse after the king that is our souverain lord whom god for his mercy preserve and kepe We praye yow as hertely and entirely as we can and may and also requere you by the faithe and ligeance that ye owe to god and to the said courone that ye ne yeve in noo wyse assent conseil ne confort to any thing that myght be ordenned pourposed or advised in derogacōn of the saide lawes usage and custume if any suche be in prejudice of us ... that the forsaide lawes usage and custume ne shulde be blemysshed or hurt by our lachesse negligence or deffaulte ner any prejudice be engendred to any person souffisant and able to the whiche saide gouvernance myght in cas semblable be longyng in tyme coming."

²³ WOLFFE, p. 31.

²⁴ ROSKELL, pp. 197–9.

ently already lost so much ground that the codicil of 26 August was not even presented any more at the opening of Henry V's will.²⁵ The last vestiges of Gloucester frail authority fell before parliament on 5 December 1422, when his claim to the regency was refuted on three grounds. First, it was found that the civil law concept of *tutela* was incompatible with English common law. Second, it was decreed that the establishment of a regency contradicted historical precedent. Third, it was ruled that a king could not regulate the governance of the realm after his death by testamentary provision. Bedford's claim as heir presumptive was only admitted in so far as the elder duke was granted the title of principal councillor and the authority of protector. In Bedford's absence, these limited powers were to be held by Gloucester. The responsibility for the governance of the land during the minority of Henry VI was, however, to devolve on a representative council.²⁶

What may have been Gloucester's transient success of 28 September was thus apparently countermanded by his elder brother's intervention. Yet the younger duke did not immediately abandon his endeavours to achieve a settlement that would satisfy what he perceived to be Henry V's deathbed wishes. In December 1422, he submitted a memorandum to the lords, in which he tried to deflect the main objections to the *tutela*-clause. Sidestepping the charge that the concept of *tutela* was incompatible with common law, Gloucester emphasised that it had been the commons who had particularly urged the establishment of a regency.²⁷ Clearly this manoeuvre aimed to disprove the charge that such a settlement was contrary to English popular sentiment. Counter to the contention that there existed no historical precedent for the establishment of a regency on the terms

²⁵ See above, n. 16.

²⁶ *R.P.*, iv, 326–7. Discussed in extenso by ROSKELL, J.S., *The Commons in the Parliament of 1422. English Society and Parliamentary Representation under the Lancastrians* (Manchester, 1954), pp. 97–124.

²⁷ CHRIMES, 'Pretensions', p. 102 "... ffirst for as muche as it is desired and asked by the commune who shuld have the governance of this Reme undre our souverain lord bi his high auctorite, It semeth to my lord that by the word Defensor the petition of the commune nys nat satisfied. Wherefor it semeth hym that, lesse than he have the name of governour undre the kyng or anothir name equivalent therto, the said petition nys nat answered. Also for as much as bi vertue of the codicill my lord [Gloucester] shuld have *tutelam et defensionem principales* of the kyng . . . nevertheless because that afterwards it was declared that *tutela* was suche a terme of lawe civile that they derst nat agree to for divers causes . . ."

suggested by the codicil of August 1422, Gloucester cited the example of William Marshall's appointment as *rector regis et regni Anglie* during the minority of Henry III.²⁸ In response to the accusation that Henry V had disregarded the rights of the lords and parliament, when he had tried to regulate the governance of the realm after his death by his will, Gloucester offered to make his appointment as *tutor* dependent on the assent of the council and popular acclaim.²⁹ Moreover, the duke volunteered that he was prepared to renounce his empowerment with quasi-single rule implicit in the concept of *tutela* in favour of close cooperation with the council.³⁰ Finally, Gloucester proposed that whatever settlement were agreed upon in the course of this parliament should be open to review once Bedford returned to England.³¹

Clearly the duke's memorandum was not, as has hitherto been asserted, a testimony to his presumptuousness but a carefully balanced compromise.³² In the context of the present investigation, the

²⁸ Ibid., "but for to agree therin to the seid codicill as ny as they myght goodly, they have assented for to call my lord Defensor of this reme and chief counseiller of the kyng and natwithstanding that they coud fynde no recordis but of kyng Richardis tyme where that my lord of lancastre hadde no such name of gouvernour but oonly hadde his bretheren my lord of York and Gloucestre associoed to hym to surveye and correcte the defautes of them that were apppointed for to be of the kingis conseil . . . Whereuppon my lord willyng that bi his negl . . . [illegible passage in MS] brother of Bedford ne he be nat harmed in his default hath to do for to serche olde recordis and hathe founde that in kyng henri is tyme the thridde William Mareschall erle of Pembroke that was nat so nygh to the kyng as my lord is to our liege lord . . . was called Rector Regis et Regni Anglie"

²⁹ Ibid., "and so for to conclude hym wolde thenke of reson that outhir he shuld in according to the desir of the commune be called governour or according to this record Rector Regni . . . and this maner charge he desireth for to take upon hym by assent of the conseil with addicion of this word defensor after the desir and appointment of the lordis."

³⁰ Ibid., "Item he desireth that it shuld be enacted that like as he shall no grete thing do but by thavys of conseil except certain specialtes, so be it ordeined that the conseil do nothing but that longeth of cours and of commune lawe without my lord is advis like as it hath p'metted and declared bi the lordis afor this tyme . . ."

³¹ Ibid., pp. 102-3, "Item that my lord of Bedford be nat bounde by this aggreyng of my lord, for it is nat his entent to bynde his brothir in his absence but for to condescend to this conclusion as for his owen persone at this tyme to the plesir of the lordis for theexploit of this parlement unto his brothir is comyng home and thenne bothe his brothir and e for to stonde at large if them like or for to accepte the seid thing forthe uppon hem and take . . . [illegible in MS] mission to them bothe in such form as thay bothe will be advised."

³² ROSKELL, 'Office and Dignity', p. 220, concluded his detailed discussion of the memorandum with the observation that it had been ill-judged and counterproductive. Harsher verdicts are implicit in the accounts of GRIFFITHS, pp. 19-22 and HARRISS, pp. 116-7.

memorandum is of particular interest, because the invocation of popular backing and reference to historical models in that document were to become characteristic of Gloucester's later policy. With reference to the political debate of 1422, however, the duke's concessions came too late to redress the unfavourable effects of Bedford's intervention on what appears from the August codicil to Henry V's testament to have been the late king's bold scheme for the installation of a Lancastrian regency: Gloucester's memorandum was refuted; the establishment of the council was confirmed. This was the constellation which would prevail in English politics for the better part of the following two decades. The experience of his own failure to fulfil what he perceived to have been Henry V's dying wishes, his frustration with Bedford, and the growing apprehension of his opponents in the council, which he must have experienced during this period, seem to have left a lasting impression on Gloucester and were apparently to inform his political action and literary patronage until well into the 1440s.

CHAPTER THREE

GLOUCESTER'S HAINAULT CAMPAIGN, HIS FIRST CONFRONTATION WITH HENRY BEAUFORT IN 1425, BEDFORD'S INTERVENTION OF 1425/6, AND LYDGATE'S *SERPENT OF DIVISION*

Alongside the insistence on his title to the *tutela* of Henry VI, another dominant theme in Gloucester's policy until the late 1430s was his acute mistrust of Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester. The present chapter aims to retrace the origins of this enmity in the period from 1423 to 1427, which witnessed the first confrontation between Gloucester and the prelate. It proposes that Gloucester's hostility to Beaufort was not, as has previously been argued, a manifestation of personal animosity but reflected the duke's fear of the dynastic ambitions of the Beaufort family, which he perceived as a threat to Lancastrian interests and to his self-assumed mission as guardian of Henry V's legacy during the minority of Henry VI.

Another recurrent motif in Gloucester's career was his recourse to historical models for the interpretation and formulation of policy. This practice had been foreshadowed in the duke's reference to William Marshall's regency in his memorandum of December 1422. It is here argued that late in 1425, in response to the political crisis brought on by his confrontation with Beaufort, Gloucester commissioned John Lydgate with the *Serpent of Division*, and contends that this was the first explicit manifestation of a close relationship between literary patronage and political action which was to characterise Gloucester's policy during the following two decades.

The objective of this investigation is to create the basis for an understanding of three interlocking themes that dominated Gloucester's policy from 1425/6 onwards: his mistrust of Beaufort, his perception of the dynamic interrelation between literary patronage and political action, and his determination to protect the legacy of Henry V even against the interests of his elder brother, John, duke of Bedford.

The origin of the conflict between Gloucester and Beaufort is often traced to the duke's resentment of the bishop's alleged role of leader

of the oligarchic opposition in 1422.¹ Yet there is no evidence for such activity on Beaufort's part during the establishment of conciliar government and the sources from that period contradict the hypothesis of mounting tensions between him and Gloucester from 1422 onwards; on the contrary, as late as in 1424 the duke apparently still had sufficient confidence in Beaufort to entrust him with the office of protector of the realm and principal councillor of the infant Henry VI, while he himself left England to pursue his territorial ambitions on the continent.^{1a}

A brief look at the background of the Beaufort family and the relations of its members with the Lancastrians may provide an explanation for Gloucester's trust in Beaufort at the beginning the minority.² Like the Lancastrians, the Beauforts descended from John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. Henry V, Bedford and Gloucester were the sons of Henry IV, Gaunt's oldest son from his marriage with Blanche of Lancaster. John (1372–1412), Henry (1375–1447), Thomas (1377–1427), and Joan Beaufort (1379–1440), on the other hand, were Gaunt's children by his mistress, Catherine Swynford. Gaunt had provided his bastard children with prestigious offices at the court of Richard II; he had arranged advantageous marital alliances for them and, in 1396, he had obtained the legitimisation of his second family under the name of Beaufort. The proper rise of the Beauforts began, however, only with the Lancastrian usurpation. The male Beauforts and their brother-in-law, Ralph, earl of Westmorland, were among the earliest supporters of Henry IV. Serving the king in military and administrative functions, they became stalwarts of Lancastrian rule; in return, they profited from royal patronage and were promoted to leading offices in the realm. John Beaufort died in 1410, but Thomas Beaufort was appointed admiral for life of England, Ireland and Aquitaine and Henry Beaufort, who had chosen an ecclesiastical career, served Henry IV as chancellor and was promoted to Winchester, the richest episcopal see in England.

This pattern of service and reward continued under Henry V. Thomas Beaufort became one of Henry V's most trusted military

¹ VICKERS, pp. 107–17; GRIFFITHS, p. 21, pp. 28–31; WOLFFE, p. 31; HARRISS, pp. 115–8.

^{1a} THOMAS, pp. 32–4.

² The following summary of the rise of the Beauforts is based on HARRISS, pp. 1–133.

commanders. Henry Beaufort officiated as chancellor between 1413 and 1417. As the crown's most skilled advisor, he liaised between king and parliament and was instrumental in securing the substantial grants of taxation for Henry V's French campaigns. Beaufort himself became one of the most important lenders to the crown. In 1417, he participated in the council of Constance, where he engineered the election of Martin V. Following a three year period during which—for reasons that will be treated below—he was forced to keep a low profile, the bishop from late 1420 onwards gradually returned to prominence in English politics and resumed his function as financial advisor. Meanwhile, Henry V generously remunerated the services of the Beauforts by granting them substantial estates in Normandy.

Their mutually advantageous relations in the political domain were reinforced by informal bonds. The solidarity of the lineage was emphasised by joint feudal tenures and testamentary provisions, and affirmed by spiritual ties, such as god-parentage and joint religious foundations.³ The acceptance of the Beauforts into the Lancastrian fold was signified by the investiture of John and Thomas Beaufort as knights of the Garter, and Henry Beaufort's prominent role as prelate to the Order.⁴ Outwardly, the status of the Beauforts as honorary members of the Lancastrian lineage was signalled by the elevation, in 1416, of Thomas Beaufort as duke of Exeter in tail male, which accorded him the same rank as his nephews, John, duke of Bedford and Humphrey, duke of Gloucester.⁵ The Lancastrians and the Beauforts lived thus in a seemingly harmonious symbiotic relationship; this may explain why Gloucester, whose previous experience in domestic politics had been limited to his two brief spells as lieutenant of the realm, did not hesitate to leave the management of government to his Beaufort uncle, while he himself focused on the project of an English intervention in Hainault under his own command.

In spring 1421, Jacqueline, duchess of Hainault, Brabant, Holland and Zeeland, had left her husband, John, duke of Brabant, and fled

³ Ibid., p. 20, p. 111; *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (for Henry VI's reign) (6 vols., HMSO, Norwich, 1901–10), 1413–26, p. 338; *A Collection of the Wills of the Kings and Queens of England*, ed. J.A. NICHOLS (London, 1780), p. 274.

⁴ HARRISS, p. 62, p. 83, p. 86.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 384–5; ALLMAND, pp. 334–6.

to England, where she had been generously received at court. Apparently, Henry V had envisaged a matrimonial alliance between the runaway duchess and one of his brothers. Such an alliance would have allowed him to exert pressure on the duke of Burgundy, who coveted Jacqueline's lands. Moreover, it held the promise of an extension of the English dominion on the continent and opened the long term prospect of profitable economic relations between England and the non-Burgundian Low Countries. Finally, such an alliance would have ensured the territorial endowment of one of the royal brothers at no cost to the crown.⁶

Nothing had come of this project in 1421, but in the aftermath of the 1422 settlement Gloucester revived the idea. Over and above the considerations that had encouraged Henry V to contemplate an alliance with Jacqueline, the scheme would have been attractive to Gloucester for two reasons. First, a successful military campaign in the Low Countries held the promise of rich territorial gain and might have given the duke an opportunity to establish and strengthen his ties with the leading secular lords.⁷ Secondly, having previously mainly excelled as a military commander and administrator in Lancastrian France, Gloucester may have found that the office as protector in England left him with little effective power and no outlet for his military ambition.

By the end of 1422, Gloucester therefore seems to have come to an agreement with Jacqueline. Early in 1423, the duchess declared her marriage with John of Brabant invalid on canonical grounds and, without waiting for licence from Rome, married Gloucester.⁸ In the following year, the duke raised a sizeable armed force, and, in October 1424, he embarked for the Low Countries after he had entrusted Henry Beaufort with the office of protector and first councillor of the king for the term of his absence.⁹

Gloucester's Hainault campaign, the reasons for its failure, and the effects it had on English foreign policy, have been discussed in

⁶ FERGUSON, J., *English Diplomacy 1422-1461* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 8-10; THOMAS, pp. 69-74, pp. 85-9.

⁷ Gloucester's landed endowment and affinity was limited by comparison with other magnates *ibid.*, pp. 10-13, pp. 28-32; VICKERS, p. 125; WARNER, M., 'The Anglo-French Dual Monarchy and the House of Burgundy, 1420-1435: The Survival of an Alliance', *French History*, xi (1997), 104-30, at p. 122.

⁸ VICKERS, p. 127.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-30; THOMAS, pp. 75-8; WARNER, p. 122.

detail elsewhere. For the purpose of the present investigation suffice it to state that his intervention in the Low Countries yielded no positive results; it put the Anglo-Burgundian alliance to a serious test; and it further undermined the already feeble basis of trust between Gloucester and Bedford, who had vigorously opposed his younger brother's continental escapade.¹⁰ Most important, however, by leaving England to pursue his ambitions on the continent, Gloucester had made a capital mistake with respect to domestic politics, as he was to realise upon his return to the realm in April 1425.

When Gloucester entered London with his troops in mid-April 1425, he was refused access to the Tower, which had been garrisoned at the command of the council under Beaufort's presidency. The duke protested against this measure and took immediate steps to reassert his prerogative as protector. At the opening of parliament on 30 April 1425, he and Exeter carried the infant Henry VI into Westminster hall as a symbolic affirmation of the royal authority and their own responsibility for the king's protection.¹¹ Meanwhile, the council had begun to channel a stream of favours his way; this failed, however, to dissipate Gloucester's mounting unease at the facts brought to light by his enquiry into Beaufort's activity in England during his absence.¹²

The majority of the council members were associated with the extensive kinship nexus of the Beauforts. Even before Gloucester's departure for the continent these men had discreetly directed the flow of crown patronage into the hands of their own clients; in the absence of the duke, however, they had openly exploited their connections to strengthen Beaufort influence in English politics.¹³ Henry Beaufort himself had not only secured a raise of his salary as chancellor amounting to an additional 2,000 marks per annum but he had also assumed almost complete control of the government's budgetary administration.¹⁴ Confronted with these facts, Gloucester's atti-

¹⁰ VICKERS, pp. 125–61; THOMAS, pp. 57–118; ARMSTRONG, C.A.J., 'La Double Monarchie France-Angleterre et la Maison de Bourgogne (1420–1435): Le Déclin d'une Alliance', *Annales de Bourgogne*, xxxvii (1963), 81–112, repr. in id., *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century* (London/1983), pp. 343–74, at p. 363; WARNER, pp. 121–9.

¹¹ VICKERS, p. 163, pp. 170–1; HARRISS, pp. 140–41.

¹² Ibid., p. 142; VICKERS, p. 163; THOMAS, pp. 124–5.

¹³ GRIFFITHS, pp. 29–30, p. 36, pp. 70–73, pp. 85–8; HARRISS, pp. 118–21, pp. 128–30, pp. 144–6, pp. 154–7.

¹⁴ *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England*, ed. N.H. NICOLAS (7 vols.,

tude towards Beaufort changed from its previous confidence to open hostility.

Gerald Harriss first located the deeper causes for the tensions between Gloucester and his uncle, not in personal animosity but in the rivalry between the Lancastrians and the Beauforts.¹⁵ Underneath the veneer of harmonious cooperation, the relationship between the two families had always been problematic as the Lancastrians had repeatedly checked the dynastic ambitions of the Beauforts. In 1406/7, Henry IV had explicitly excluded the Beauforts from the succession to the throne.¹⁶ Some six years later, the Lancastrians had sought to bring the nucleus of the Beaufort patrimony under their control when they dictated the marriage of John Beaufort's widow, Margaret Holland, with Thomas, duke of Clarence.¹⁷ This strategic match failed to produce any offspring and John's estate therefore remained in the hands of the Beauforts. Yet in 1421 Clarence had taken Margaret's two elder sons from her marriage with Beaufort to France, where they were promptly captured by the enemy. The Beauforts had to raise the ransoms for the brothers, and for two decades. Margaret's youngest son, Edmund, stood alone to continue the Beauforts into the next generation.¹⁸ In 1418, Henry Beaufort himself had come to experience Henry V's determination to protect his royal prerogative against the putative threat of encroachment, when the king had prohibited his elevation to the cardinalate. In December 1417, Martin V had created Beaufort cardinal and *legatus a latere* in England, Wales and Ireland. In addition, the prelate had been granted dispensation to keep Winchester *in commendam*. Perceiving Beaufort's legatine status, combined with the grant of Winchester, as a threat to his royal sovereignty, Henry V had taken immediate steps to prevent the papal promotion from taking effect. During a private interview late in 1418, the king had apparently threatened his uncle with charges of *praemunire* should he publish his bull of appointment, or attempt to exercise his legatine powers. Beaufort had then been given the choice either to resign from Winchester and take up his seat in consistory, or to renounce the Red Hat and keep his English see.

Record Com., London, 1834-7), iii, 165; HARRISS, pp. 125-6, p. 146; GRIFFITHS, pp. 112-3; WOLFFE, pp. 42-3.

¹⁵ HARRISS, pp. 384-5, pp. 390-91.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 39-40.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 63-4.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 103-4.

Reluctantly, Beaufort had chosen the latter. For some three years, the prelate retired from politics to return to favour only after he had made another substantial loan to the crown.¹⁹

Gloucester may have remembered these past incidents as he scrutinised the record of Beaufort's action during his absence, and probably he began to suspect that the prelate felt less loyal to the Lancastrian cause than he had assumed, when he had entrusted Beaufort with the care for Henry VI, to pursue his own territorial ambitions on the continent. Seen from such a dynastic perspective, certain other aspects of Beaufort's recent conduct must have assumed a distinctly sinister character in Gloucester's eyes. First, as a result of financial transactions sanctioned by the council under Beaufort's presidency, crown jewels which had been pledged to the prelate as security for due repayment of his loans, had forfeited to Beaufort, who had thus appropriated central symbols of kingship.²⁰ Secondly, as one of the chief feoffees of the duchy of Lancaster, Beaufort had gained almost complete control of the financial administration of the Lancastrian noble estate.²¹ Finally, during Gloucester's absence, Henry Beaufort had apparently encouraged a budding romance between his nephew Edmund and Henry V's young widow, Catherine of Valois, and if the queen could be seduced to marry Edmund, those parts of the Lancastrian inheritance which she held in dower, would fall into the hands of the Beauforts as well.²²

Apart from Henry Beaufort, whose clerical status and cadet position within the Beaufort lineage would have impeded his own elevation to the kingship, the Beaufort family lacked a strong representative who would have been able sufficiently to assert his authority to

¹⁹ McFARLANE, K.B., 'Henry V, Bishop Beaufort and the Red Hat, 1417-1421', in id., *England in the Fifteenth Century*, pp. 79-113; HARRISS, pp. 91-114.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 89, pp. 121-7. Among the crown jewels held by Beaufort were the Great Crown and the Sword of Spain, McFARLANE, K.B., 'At the Deathbed of Cardinal Beaufort', in id., *England in the Fifteenth Century*, pp. 115-37, at p. 127n. Both were of central importance in the coronation ceremony, WICKHAM LEGG, L.G., *English Coronation Records* (Westminster, 1901), xxv.

²¹ HARRISS, pp. 127-8; SOMERVILLE, pp. 109-204; STRONG/STRONG, pp. 87-8.

²² HARRISS, p. 144; GRIFFITHS, R.A., 'Queen Catherine of Valois and a Missing Statute of the Realm', in id., *King and Country. England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1991), pp. 103-13, at pp. 105-7, pp. 103-13; CRAWFORD, A., 'The King's Burden?: the Consequences of Royal Marriage in Fifteenth-Century England', in GRIFFITHS, R.A. (ed.), *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces* (Gloucester, 1981), pp. 33-56, at pp. 44-5.

achieve his ascendancy in English politics. In the 1420s, a usurpation of the English crown by the Beauforts was, therefore, unlikely. Nonetheless, in view of the evidence for the bishop's moves during his absence on the continent, and alerted by Beaufort's hostile action upon his return to England, it would have been easy for Gloucester to come to the conclusion that the powerful prelate harboured far-reaching ambitions for his own family, that Beaufort had supported his Hainault venture solely in order to promote these interests all the more efficiently, and that the bishop's prominence in English politics represented a lurking threat to the Lancastrian dynasty.²³

Under the impression of such diffuse fears Gloucester may have come to the painful conclusion that by confiding in Henry Beaufort and by pursuing his personal interests on the continent, he had betrayed the trust which Henry V had shown in him when he had commissioned him with the *tutela* of his infant heir. It is here proposed that torn between acute disappointment at what he may have perceived as Beaufort's exploitation of his confidence and compunction at his own naïveté, Gloucester, during these months, conceived an almost obsessive apprehension of Beaufort's putative dynastic ambitions. At the same time, the duke seems to have determined never again to neglect his obligation to Henry VI, to the political legacy of Henry V, and to the Lancastrian dynasty. These two motifs were to inform Gloucester's policy in the ensuing two decades.

In the months following his return from the Low Countries, however, the duke's primary aim was to prevent a coup at the hands of Beaufort as head of the royal council. On 29 October 1425, he received information that the prelate was gathering men at Southwark. Gloucester immediately issued a warning to the mayor of London to guard the city and set armed watches. When the duke attempted on the next day to ride to Eltham and take the king into his custody, his way was blocked by Beaufort's men, who had taken position at London Bridge. Only the mediation of leading spiritual lords prevented a confrontation on that day. Aware that he had no right to oppose the protector, Beaufort eventually withdrew his men. Gloucester brought the king to London, and in the following days

²³ Gloucester's fears seem to be pointedly expressed in his assertion that Henry V had told him of an attempt on his [Henry V's] life, which Henry Beaufort had allegedly instigated in 1413, compare *Chronicles of London*, ed. C.L. KINGSFORD (Oxford, 1905), p. 78.

he demonstrated his recovered authority by summoning the council to meet under his presidency and at his private lodgings.²⁴

Beaufort had been forced to bow to the protector. Yet, unwilling to relinquish the power he had accumulated during the duke's absence, he decided to call to his aid the one man whose authority was superior to that of Gloucester: John, duke of Bedford. The prelate could be confident of Bedford's backing, because for the conquest of Maine and Anjou, which he had designated as his personal appanage in 1424, the elder duke was dependent on Beaufort's loans.²⁵ The prelate played this card to maximum effect. On 31 October 1425 he wrote to Bedford:

as ye desire the welfare off the kyng oure sovereyne lorde and off his Rewmes off England and off Fraunce, and your owne wele and oure also, hast you hedir; ffor be my trouth and ye tarye, we shall putte this land in aventure with a ffelde. Such a brothir ye have here. God make him a goode man. For your wisdom knoweth wele that the prosperite of Fraunce stant in the welfare of England.²⁶

Bedford immediately responded to the implicit threat in these lines: late in December 1425, the elder duke returned to England, and in the ensuing weeks he demonstratively sided with Beaufort.²⁷ Bedford's attitude towards Gloucester became obvious early in January 1426, when the elder duke informed Philip of Burgundy that Gloucester had dispatched enforcements to Jacqueline of Hainault; Gloucester's troops were intercepted at their landing in Zeeland and massacred by Burgundian forces.²⁸

This betrayal, combined with Bedford's open support of Beaufort, would scarcely have enhanced Gloucester's love for his brother. Yet, whatever his personal feelings, Gloucester may still have greeted Bedford's return; for he may have hoped that the elder duke would be able to deal more effectively with Beaufort's overbearance than himself. Moreover, Gloucester may have expected that with his brother back in the country the question of the governance of England would be reopened and Bedford would be installed as regent. First, however, the younger duke needed to win Bedford's confidence. For

²⁴ HARRISS, pp. 142–3; VICKERS, pp. 171–5; GRIFFITHS, *Henry VI*, pp. 73–7.

²⁵ HARRISS, pp. 125–6, pp. 138–9.

²⁶ *Chronicles of London*, p. 84.

²⁷ HARRISS, p. 151.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139; THOMAS, pp. 66–7.

this reason, Gloucester apparently contrived to offer his brother a formal contract of alliance.

The compact of alliance between Gloucester and Bedford has hitherto been ascribed to Bedford's authorship.²⁹ Yet as the only surviving copy of the contract is preserved in the formulary of Gloucester's erstwhile secretary, Thomas Bekynton, it seems more likely that the idea for the contract originated with the younger duke.³⁰ The treaty has been dated to 1422/3 or to early 1427.³¹ Neither date is entirely satisfactory. Despite Bedford's conduct in autumn 1422, Gloucester's relations with his brother had, by early 1422/3, not yet deteriorated to such a degree as to necessitate written assurances of good behaviour. By early 1427, on the other hand, the animosity between the two dukes had reached such a pitch as to make it unlikely that either of them should still have conceived it possible to solve their dissensions by means of a contract.³²

It therefore appears reasonable to follow Stubbs's dating of the document to late 1425 or early 1426.³³ At that point, whatever bond of fraternal trust had once existed between the dukes would have become so tenuous as to make a formal compact seem the only way to bind them to a common cause. Yet Gloucester might still have been willing to make a bid for his brother's confidence. Moreover, the content of the treaty perfectly fits the situation in the aftermath of the crisis of autumn 1425. The stated need for a confirmation of the bond between Bedford and Gloucester to ward off a threat to the peace of the realm emanating from within the royal *familia*, neatly corresponds to apparent Gloucester's fear of a coup at the hand of the Beauforts.³⁴ The provision that Gloucester, Bedford and queen Catherine were to serve and honour each other before all others save the king, that they would resist each other's enemies, and give no credence to those who sought to sow discord between them, may have been indicative of Gloucester's apprehension of attempts to alienate Bedford and Catherine from the Lancastrian cause.³⁵ Finally,

²⁹ Ibid, p. 44; VICKERS, p. 117; WOLFFE, p. 44.

³⁰ Printed in BEKYNTON, T., *Official Correspondence of Thomas Bekynton, Bishop of Bath and Wells*, ed. G. WILLIAMS (2 vols., Rolls ser., London, 1872), i, 138-45.

³¹ VICKERS, pp. 117-8; FERGUSON, p. 4; WOLFFE, p. 44; THOMAS, pp. 44-5.

³² For the relations between the two dukes in early 1427 see below, pp. 45-7.

³³ STUBBS, iii, 109-10.

³⁴ BEKYNTON, i, 139.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 140-42.

the stipulation that Bedford and Gloucester would, henceforth, inform each other of their every move in politics and that they would enter no new alliances without mutual advice or consent, could be seen as a signal of good will on Gloucester's part, after he had defied Bedford's admonitions on the Hainault issue.³⁶

Therefore, it is here proposed that the contract of alliance between the two dukes was drafted at Gloucester's initiative in late 1425 or early 1426 in order to compensate for the lack of confidence between him and Bedford and as a means to create a common Lancastrian front against what Gloucester perceived as the threat to their dynasty from the Beauforts. As an offer of cooperation and an indication of Gloucester's willingness to subordinate himself to the authority of Bedford, the contract resembles the younger duke's memorandum of December 1422, and could hence be interpreted as proof that in the immediate aftermath of his first confrontation with Beaufort Gloucester was still amenable to the idea of a collaboration with his elder brother. He had yet to convince Bedford of the necessity of such joint action.

In order to draw Bedford's attention to what he perceived as a threat to Lancastrian ascendance and to impress the need for cooperation on his brother, Gloucester may have determined to rely on historical example taken from classical literature and clothed in contemporary rhetoric. Gloucester and his brothers came from an educated background. During the fourteenth century, several members of the Bohun family of their mother had excelled as patrons of letters.³⁷ As duke of Lancaster, Henry IV had taken care to provide his children with a good education in letters. Shortly after his accession, he had endeavoured to attract Christine de Pisan to his newly established court and during his reign several advice books on statecraft had been written for Henry, prince of Wales.³⁸ Henry V's interest in books is confirmed by the dispositions for his library in his testament.³⁹ Thomas, duke of Clarence owned several valuable codices,

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 140–43.

³⁷ VICKERS, pp. 342–6; MCFARLANE, K.B., *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford, 1972), p. 22, pp. 115–7, pp. 233–8; EVEREST-PHILLIPS, pp. 35–6.

³⁸ Ibid; GREEN, R., *Poets and Princepleasers. Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1980), pp. 75–7; ORME, N., *From Childhood to Chivalry. The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066–1530* (London, 1984), p. 146; below, chapter five, p. 62.

³⁹ STRONG/STRONG, pp. 93–4.

and John, duke of Bedford assembled a rich collection of French and Burgundian luxury productions of religious works.⁴⁰ Moreover, the Lancastrians had a keen sense of the propagandistic value of literature and consciously relied on the ready pen of court apologists to legitimise their political projects.⁴¹ One of the leading Lancastrian propagandists was John Lydgate (1371–1449).⁴² The Benedictine monk first rose to prominence during the final years of Henry V's reign. In the ensuing years Lydgate continued to enjoy the patronage of several members of the Lancastrian kinship nexus.⁴³ With respect to John Lydgate's popularity with the Lancastrian establishment, and in view of the interest of the royal family in letters, it is here proposed, that late in 1425 Humphrey, duke of Gloucester commissioned the court poet with the composition of the *Serpent of Division* as a supplement to the compact of alliance with Bedford and in order further to impress the necessity of joint action on his elder brother.

Lydgate's *Serpent of Division* represents the earliest treatment in English of the civil war in Rome and Caesar's rise to power.⁴⁴ Opening with a discussion of the constitutional changes that led to the installation of the triumvirate, the story turns into a summary account of the campaigns of Crassus and Caesar, and of Pompey's activity as regent in Rome during their absence. Pompey's seizure of power after Crassus's death, and his refusal to reward Caesar's military achievement with a triumph, are presented as cause for

⁴⁰ On Clarence's books DOYLE, A.I., 'English Books In and Out of Court from Edward III to Henry VII', in SCATTERGOOD, V.J./SHERBORNE, J.W. (eds.), *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1983), pp. 162–81, at pp. 168–70. For Bedford see EVEREST-PHILLIPS, pp. 36–43; STRATFORD, J., 'The manuscripts of John, duke of Bedford's library and chapel', in WILLIAMS, D. (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth Century* (Bury St Edmunds, 1987), pp. 329–50; id., *The Bedford Inventories. The Worldly Goods of John, Duke of Bedford, Regent of France (1389–1435)* (London, 1993) ad indicem; RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 115–7.

⁴¹ PATTERSON, L., 'Making Identities in Fifteenth Century England: Henry V and John Lydgate', in COX, J.N./REYNOLDS, L.J. (eds.), *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 69–107; FISHER, J.H., 'A Language Policy for Lancastrian England', in PINTI, D.J. (ed.), *Writing after Chaucer. Essential Readings in Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century*, pp. 81–100; STROHM, P., *England's Empty Throne. Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399–1422* (New Haven, 1998), chs. 1, 7, 8.

⁴² GREEN, pp. 182–91; PEARSALL, D., *John Lydgate (1371–1449). A Bio-Bibliography*, English Literary Studies, Monograph ser. 71 (Victoria, 1997), 28–31.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 18–25; SCHIRMER, W., *John Lydgate, a Study in the Culture of the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1961), pp. 66–9, pp. 81–119; EVEREST-PHILLIPS, pp. 118–30.

⁴⁴ LYDGATE, J., *The Serpent of Division*, ed. H.N. MACCRACKEN (London and New Haven, 1911).

Caesar's armed intervention and the establishment of his single rule. A laudatory account of Caesar's reign is followed by the description of his murder and a moralizing meditation on the power of fortune.

One of the four surviving manuscript copies of the *Serpent* states that the text had been completed in "the moneth of Decembre, the ffirst yere of our sovereign lord that now ys king henry vi^{te}".⁴⁵ Therefore, the *Serpent* has generally been attributed to 1422, and it has been assumed that it was intended as a commentary on the establishment of conciliar government.⁴⁶ It is difficult to reconcile the content of Lydgate's text with the events of 1422.⁴⁷ Late in 1422, there had not yet emerged a third force in English politics alongside Gloucester and Bedford; consequently, it is hard to draw an analogy between the political constellation of that year and the Roman triumvirate. Moreover, the account of Caesar's campaign in northern Europe and the sequence of events that led to the outbreak of civil war has no apparent bearing on the domestic proceedings of 1422. Finally, despite the dissension over the constitution of the minority government in 1422, there is no indication in the sources that the situation had been so tense as to warrant comparison with the civil war.⁴⁸

A recent study has therefore proposed a much later date of composition for the *Serpent*. At the end of two manuscript copies, the initials "J. de V." or "J. de B." can be found; possibly these were the initials of the dedicatee. Based on circumstantial evidence, this dedicatee has been tentatively identified as one John Baret of Bury St Edmunds, a rich cloth merchant and patron of letters, whose contacts with Lydgate dated to the 1440s. Accordingly, it has been suggested that the *Serpent* dated to the period just before the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses.⁴⁹ Ingenious as this conjecture is, it is hard

⁴⁵ MACCRACKEN, p. 66, ll. 3–4.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 1–5. See also J.W.H. Atkins's review of MacCracken's edition of the *Serpent*, *Modern Languages Quarterly*, vii (1912), 253–4; MacCracken's response, *Modern Languages Quarterly*, viii (1913), 103–4; PEARSALL, 'Bio-bibliography', pp. 23–4 and, most recently, MORTIMER, N., 'A Study of John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* in its Literary and Political Contexts' (Oxford Univ., D.Phil. thesis, 1995), pp. 83–94.

⁴⁷ SCHIRMER, *Lydgate*, p. 82; SCATTERGOOD, V.J., *Politics and Poetry in the Fifteenth Century 1399–1485* (London, 1971), p. 140.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 138.

⁴⁹ SUTTON, A.F./VISSER-FUCHS, L., 'The Provenance of the Manuscript: The Lives and Archive of Sir Thomas Cook and his Man of Affairs, John Vale', in KEKEWICH, M.L./RICHMOND, C./SUTTON, A.F. et al. (eds.), *Politics of Fifteenth Century England*, pp. 73–126, at pp. 117–22.

to square the content of the *Serpent* with any particular political constellation in the 1440s. Moreover, the assumption that the text was dedicated to a merchant fails to tally with the fact that Lydgate's intended reader was clearly a high-born politician.⁵⁰ For this reason, the present study proposes yet another date of composition for Lydgate's text. Thus the ascription of the *Serpent* to December of the "ffirst yere" of Henry VI's reign may have been due to an error of the scribe, who had misread a "ffourth" for a "ffirst"; this would move the *Serpent's* date of completion to December 1425. Likewise, it is conceivable that "J. de B.", the *Serpent's* mysterious highborn dedicatee, was in fact "Jean duc de Bedford".⁵¹ If it is furthermore assumed with MacCracken that the *Serpent* was written at Gloucester's commission, and if it is accepted that its composition coincided with the drafting of the duke's treaty of alliance, Lydgate's work suddenly gains immediate pertinence to English politics in 1425/6.⁵²

The *Serpent's* discussion of the Roman constitution opens with the statement that the triumvirate was installed

leste yif that oon offendid, the oother tweyne shulde be mighty and strong to correcte the iij^{de}: and another cause was this, while that tweyne were occupied in Conqueste owtewardes, the iijde shulde gouverne at hoome.⁵³

In 1425/6, the latter part of that statement could be read as a description of Gloucester's intention, when he had entrusted the care of the realm to Beaufort before setting out to join Bedford in the war on the continent. Meanwhile, the first clause could have been viewed as an expression of Gloucester's hope that concerted action with Bedford would allow the royal brothers to curb Beaufort's ambitions. The duke himself may have identified with Caesar, whom Lydgate portrayed as a thoroughly positive character with strong

⁵⁰ Lydgate repeatedly stressed the pertinence of his text to "prudent princes whiche have governance in provynces and regions", MACCRACKEN, p. 58, ll. 29–30; "wise governors of every londe and region", *ibid.*, p. 65, ll. 25–6; and "lordes and prynces of renowne", *ibid.*, p. 66, l. 15. For this reason SCATTERGOOD, pp. 139–40 convincingly identified the *Serpent* as belonging to the 'mirror for princes'-genre.

⁵¹ Early in 1426, Lydgate received an administrative post in Lancastrian France, SCHIRMER, *Lydgate*, pp. 116–9. Did Bedford grant Lydgate that position as a reward for the dedication of the *Serpent*?

⁵² For the identification of Gloucester as patron of the *Serpent* compare most recently MORTIMER, pp. 83–94.

⁵³ MACCRACKEN, p. 49, ll. 20–24.

military intuition and keen sense of justice.⁵⁴ The praise of Caesar's glorious exploits in "all the boundes of Burgogne, Brabande, Flaundris, and Holande" may have been intended to evoke Gloucester's recent Hainault expedition, and the dictator's defiance of his recall to Rome and his bold decision to seize the opportunity and conquer England instead, could be seen as a parallel to Gloucester's disregard for Bedford's opposition to his venture of October 1424.⁵⁵ Lydgate's negative portrait of Pompey, on the other hand, bore more than a passing resemblance to Henry Beaufort.⁵⁶ Pompey's shrewd manipulation of the senate, while Caesar and Crassus were in the field, could be read as an analogy to Beaufort's management of the council during the absence of the two Lancastrian dukes on the continent.⁵⁷ Only a few months after the cool reception of Gloucester and his troops on their return from Hainault, the assertion that Pompey had instigated the senate to the unjust denial of a triumph for Caesar would have had rich resonances in England.⁵⁸ Caesar's resolution to cross the Rubicon in order to defend his rightful title might have echoed Gloucester's decision to raise arms against Beaufort to protect the Lancastrian interest against the threat of usurpation.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, the story of how the Parthians had avenged Crassus's greed by making him drink molten gold may have sounded a sinister warning to Bedford not to forsake civil concord for Beaufort's money.⁶⁰

If it is accepted that the *Serpent of Division* was commissioned by Gloucester for the use of Bedford and as a supplement to the compact of alliance with his brother, then it becomes possible to discern a line of continuity with the duke's earlier action. Analogous to his invocation in 1422 of William Marshall's regency, Gloucester here

⁵⁴ At the beginning and the end of the *Serpent*, Lydgate alludes to Caesar's "surquidous pride", *ibid.*, p. 50, l. 3, p. 54, ll. 31–4, p. 65, l. 28. Throughout the text, however, his positive traits are emphasised when he is described as "manly man", *ibid.*, p. 50, ll. 14, 25, 28, p. 51, l. 17, p. 52, l. 19, p. 57, l. 14, p. 65, l. 26; as "knightly", p. 50, l. 29, p. 57, l. 14, p. 63, l. 26; "prudent", p. 52, l. 19; and as "noble and worthy", p. 56, l. 34; p. 57, l. 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50, ll. 18–9, ll. 25–31.

⁵⁶ Pompey is described as manipulative, deceiving, malicious and envious, *ibid.*, p. 52, ll. 11, 15, 20, 33–4, p. 53, ll. 1–2, p. 56, l. 23, p. 65, l. 29. As Caesar's son-in-law, Pompey belonged to the dictator's *familia* in the same way in which Beaufort belonged to the Lancastrian kinship-nexus.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 52, l. 28–p. 53, l. 11.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 54, ll. 26–37.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57, l. 22–p. 58, l. 15.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52, ll. 1–7.

employed historical precedent as a medium for the interpretation and direction of his present situation; only he now chose his model from ancient history. This pragmatic approach to history and the recourse to antiquity was to become characteristic of the duke's policy during the 1430s and 40s, and possibly it constituted the driving force behind his interest in Italian humanism. In 1427, however, Gloucester still relied on the services of an English author, who drew his topics from the literature of late medieval Europe, for the formulation of his interpretation of contemporary politics.

The leitmotif of the *Serpent*, that as long as unity prevailed, the kingdom would be strong, but ruin would threaten as soon as selfish ambition allowed discord to creep in, acted as a powerful affirmation of the idea of cooperation that was central to Gloucester's treaty of alliance.⁶¹ If it is assumed that the duke attributed equal importance to the literary work and the legal contract, and that both texts were intended to supplement and reinforce each other, this would testify to the practical value Gloucester attributed to literature for the interpretation and formulation of politics, and it would demonstrate how intensely the duke's literary patronage was informed by political motives. In the ensuing decades, this pragmatic approach to history and the dynamic interrelation between his action in the spheres of political and culture became distinctive of Gloucester's policy.⁶²

Whether the treaty of alliance between Gloucester and Bedford was ever ratified, or whether the elder duke took time to read *The Serpent of Division* cannot be ascertained. Early in 1426 Gloucester may, however, have felt that he had convinced his elder brother of the urgency of united action against Beaufort. In January/February 1426, the council apparently accorded Bedford an extension of his prerogative as protector so that he could deal more effectively with the crisis created by the quarrel between Beaufort and Gloucester.⁶³ In the following parliament, which convened at Leicester in March 1426, Bedford sided with Gloucester. Beaufort was required publicly to apologise for his conduct in 1425; he was forced to step down

⁶¹ This theme is reiterated throughout the text, *ibid.*, p. 49, l. 25–p. 50, l. 11; p. 50, l. 32–p. 51, l. 25; p. 52, ll. 25–8; p. 56, ll. 4–17; p. 58, l. 25–p. 59, l. 21, p. 65, l. 23–p. 67, l. 5.

⁶² This thesis contradicts Rundle's assertion that Gloucester refrained from literary patronage during the 1420s and that his literary interests had a purely representational value, RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 113–7, pp. 149–51.

⁶³ *P.P.C.*, iii, 232–3, 237–8; WOLFFE, pp. 43–4, WATTS, pp. 116–7.

from the chancellorship; and some of his most steadfast supporters were removed from the council.⁶⁴

After Bedford had so firmly checked Beaufort's ambition, Gloucester may have hoped that his elder brother would benefit from his ascendance to demand a revision of the settlement of 1422 and to reassert his claim to the regency so that he would be in a better position to defend the rights of Henry VI and Lancastrian dynastic interests. If these had been Gloucester's expectations, they were thoroughly disappointed by Bedford's conduct; for in the aftermath of the Leicester parliament, Bedford's policy reverted to its earlier Beaufort-friendly course. The prelate himself kept a low profile, but Sir Walter Hungerford, who was appointed treasurer in March 1426, and two new councillors who were sworn soon after, were known sympathisers of Beaufort.⁶⁵ Moreover, the distribution of crown patronage continued to further the factional interests and partisan influence of the Beauforts.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, Bedford adopted a markedly pro-conciliar course. Instead of challenging the legitimacy of the council, he closely collaborated with that body. In November 1426, the elder duke cooperated in a reformulation of the council ordinances, which curtailed the prerogative of the protector with respect to the council even further and prior to his return to France early in 1427, Bedford voluntarily renounced the extraordinary powers he had been granted in 1426 and subjected himself to the superior authority of the council.⁶⁷

Apparently, Gloucester responded to his brother's conduct first with dismay, then with aversion. Jointly, the dukes might have been able to loosen Beaufort's grip on the governance of the realm and the Lancastrian noble estate and Bedford would have been in a unique position to reassert his claim to the regency. This would have allowed the royal brothers to fulfil what Gloucester seems to have perceived as their spiritual obligation to Henry V, and protect the late king's political legacy in the name of his infant son. Yet Bedford had rejected Gloucester's offer of joint action and disregarded his warnings of a threat to Lancastrian interests; preferring instead to confirm the political status quo and to collaborate with Beaufort.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 116–7; VICKERS, pp. 178–87; GRIFFITHS, pp. 78–80; WOLFFE, pp. 41–4; HARRISS, pp. 151–2.

⁶⁵ WOLFFE, pp. 37–8; HARRISS, p. 157.

⁶⁶ GRIFFITHS, p. 88.

⁶⁷ *P.P.C.*, iii, 213–20, 231–42; GRIFFITHS, pp. 31–2; WOLFFE, pp. 43–4; WATTS, pp. 116–7.

By the end of 1426 Gloucester seems to have come to the conclusion that he had no more to expect from his elder brother. Early in 1427, he let it be known that Bedford might "governe as hym lust while he is in this land, for after going overe into Fraunce, [he, Gloucester, would] governe as [him] semeth good".⁶⁸ Gloucester's apprehensions of Beaufort, which may have been partly allayed after his vicarious triumph at Leicester, flared up again under the impression of the prelate's sway over his brother. From 1426 onwards, the conviction that he was the sole authentic executor of Henry V's will, and that he alone would have to bear the responsibility for the protection during the minority of Henry VI's interests against the putative efforts of the Beauforts to arrogate the Lancastrian royal prerogative was to inform Gloucester's policy. The sense of obligation towards his late brother's spiritual and political legacy was to constitute the duke's *raison d'être* during his remaining life in politics.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 240.

CHAPTER FOUR

GLOUCESTER'S ROLE IN ENGLISH POLITICS 1427 TO 1432

In March 1427, Bedford left England to resume his office of regent of France. He was accompanied by Beaufort, who had accepted an offer from the Curia to lead a crusade against the Hussites. Gloucester resumed his office as protector and first councillor to the king. The events of 1425 had apparently convinced the duke that the dynastic ambitions of the Beauforts represented a threat to Lancastrian interests and Bedford's conduct in 1426 had taught him that he could not rely on his elder brother in his efforts to defend the legacy of Henry V in the name of his infant heir. With Bedford and Beaufort out of the country, Gloucester, from 1427 onwards, enforced an independent policy.

After a scheme of renewed English engagement in Hainault had come to nothing, the council, under Gloucester's presidency, sent the largest English force since 1421 against Orléans to implement the duke's advocated strategy of breaking French resistance by dealing a mortal blow to the centre of its power. This tactic was radically opposed to Bedford's plan of a piecemeal reduction of Maine and Anjou, which the elder duke had pursued since 1424.¹ Gloucester's disregard for his brother's territorial ambitions in France further estranged the dukes and was to render cooperation between them even more difficult in the ensuing years.

Gloucester's policy between 1427 and 1432 was, however, centred on domestic affairs. The duke focused on the containment of Beaufort influence and the protection of Lancastrian interests. He endeavoured to emancipate the crown from its dependence on Beaufort's loans; he attempted to recover control of the finances of the duchy of Lancaster; finally, he had a statute ratified which put the remarriage of dowager queens under heavy restraints and thus effectively blocked a marriage between Catherine and Edmund Beaufort.²

¹ *P.P.C.*, iii, 271–4, 276, 290; RYMER, x, 375, VICKERS, pp. 199–203; ARMSTRONG, p. 365; THOMAS, pp. 200–1; HARRISS, pp. 169–71.

² *P.P.C.*, iii, 270; HARRISS, p. 171; GRIFFITHS, p. 88, p. 113; id., 'Queen Catherine', p. 108; CRAWFORD, pp. 36–7.

Concurrently, Gloucester challenged the settlement of 1422. Before Bedford's departure, the younger duke had been forced to swear that he would abide by the authority of the council. Some six months later, Gloucester tried to shake off the restraints on his prerogative, renewing his claim to the *tutela* of Henry VI under the terms of the codicil of August 1422.³ He soon learned that he had overreached himself. What initial backing Gloucester had received in the council in the immediate aftermath of Bedford's departure, had been conceded to him not because the councillors actively supported his agenda, but because they were opposed to certain aspects of Bedford's and Beaufort's politics.⁴ Without sufficient private means, and without access to crown patronage, Gloucester had been unable to consolidate these volatile alliances into a stable following. Moreover, his rigorous enforcement of the crown's feudal rights in the context of his attempts to consolidate royal finances had alienated the magnates instead of drawing them to his side.⁵ In March 1428 the great council therefore refuted the duke's claim to the *tutela*; the validity of the settlement of December 1422 was confirmed; and Gloucester was sternly requested to accommodate himself to the powers he had sworn to obey in January 1427.⁶

Defeated, Gloucester altered his tactics. Instead of insisting on his claim to the regency during Henry VI's minority, from spring 1428 onwards, the duke focused exclusively on bringing that minority to an end. Already in January 1427, he had maintained that he if he had

doon eny thing that touched the king his sovereign lordes estat, therof wolde he not answeye unto no persone on lyve, save oonly the King whan he come to his eage.⁷

³ *P.P.C.*, iii, 231–42; *R.P.*, iv, 326–7; VICKERS, pp. 189–2, pp. 206–9; ROSKELL, 'Office and Dignity', pp. 224–6.

⁴ Gloucester's attempts to curb Beaufort-influence in government had been supported by some of the spiritual lords because they resented the prelate's self-advancement at the Curia and his close relations with the papacy, DAVIES, R.G., 'Martin V and the English Episcopate, with Particular Reference to his Campaign for the Repeal of the Statute of Provisors', *EHR*, xcii (1977), 309–44, at pp. 340–3. Gloucester's military schemes, on the other hand, had been backed primarily by those secular lords, who disagreed with Bedford's overall strategy, or had been passed over in the distribution of the territorial spoils of his Verneuil-campaign of 1424/5. HARRISS, pp. 168–74; THOMAS, pp. 198–201.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 141–5, pp. 176–7; GRIFFITHS, pp. 81–3; HARRISS, p. 168.

⁶ *R.P.*, iv, 326–7; VICKERS, pp. 207–9; WOLFFE, pp. 44–5; HARRISS, p. 219.

⁷ *P.P.C.*, iii, 241.

Yet, in 1428 Henry VI was barely six years old and under normal circumstances at least another eight years would have had to pass before he would come of age.

It is here proposed that in response to that quandary Gloucester reinterpreted his commission as *tutor* to designate his obligation to prepare Henry VI for his royal office so that the young king would be able to exercise his personal rule at the earliest possible time, and that as part of this new strategy, Gloucester determined to expose his royal nephew to a rigorous programme of education. In June 1428, the earl of Warwick, a long-standing servant of the Lancastrians, who was widely renowned for his chivalric virtue and noble learning, was appointed as Henry VI's personal tutor.⁸ The council under Gloucester's presidency gave Warwick precise instructions concerning the curriculum for his royal charge. Thus the earl was to

teche the Kyng and make hym to be taught nurture lettrure langage and other mannere of cunnyng . . . suche as it fitteth so greet a prince to be lerned of.⁹

In particular, Warwick was required to

generally norysshe [Henry VI] and drawe hym to vertues and the eschewyng of vices . . . leiying before hym mirroures and examples of tymes passed of the good grace and ure prosperite and wele that have fallen to vertuous Kyngis and to here landes and subgittes of that oo part and of that contrair fortune that hath ensued to the Kyngis and to here landes and subgittes of the contrarie disposicion on that other part.¹⁰

Apparently, the earl was also expected to introduce the king to the first elements of the art of war; for at the age of seven, Henry VI received two "lytill cote armurs" and "viii swerdis and a long blade of a swerde".¹¹

The qualification that these weapons were made "for to lerne the kyng to play in his tendre age", and the proviso that Warwick was to impart this knowledge by "voies et moienes convenables tielles come nostre [Henry VI's] eage pur le temps est vraisemblable a comprendre" could hardly conceal that the course of study set out

⁸ *P.P.C.*, iii, 296–9; GRIFFITHS, p. 52; WOLFFE, pp. 45–7.

⁹ *P.P.C.*, iii, 299.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *C.P.R.*, vi, 1452–61, p. 247; ORME, p. 184; WOLFFE, p. 46; GRIFFITHS, p. 53.

for Henry VI was far in advance of his age.¹² Giles of Rome, the most popular educational theorist in late medieval Europe, recommended that boys between the ages of seven and fourteen should learn to master their childish passion and be exposed to modest physical exercise. Only at the age of twelve to fourteen should they be introduced to the practice of arms and the *artes morales*, which prepared them for their future role as political leaders. Giles granted a certain flexibility to this programme, yet he explicitly warned of overtaxing young children by subjecting them too early to demanding exercise.¹³ By contrast to contemporary practice, Giles's recommendations were not observed in the new educational programme for Henry VI, which the council under Gloucester's presidency ratified in November 1428.¹⁴ This suggests, that by exposing his nephew to a curriculum that was some seven years in advance of his age, Gloucester hoped to hasten Henry VI's intellectual maturation in order to expedite the inauguration of the king's personal rule.

The adverse turn of events in France unexpectedly played into Gloucester's hands. The withdrawal of the Burgundian forces from Orléans and the appearance of Joan of Arc on the walls of that city in spring 1429, ended the unsuccessful siege of Orléans and initiated a powerful Dauphinist offensive on Lancastrian territory.¹⁵ A French attack on Paris was averted only by the diversion into France of an English army, which Henry Beaufort had raised in spring 1429 with the ostensible purpose of leading it to Bohemia.¹⁶ Yet even Beaufort's intervention could not prevent the coronation of the Dauphin at Rheims in July 1429. In response to this serious blow to the English position in France, in autumn 1429, Bedford urgently requested the council in England to proceed with the coronation of Henry VI as king of England and France as an affirmation of the

¹² Ibid.; *P.P.C.*, iii, 299.

¹³ COLONNA, E., *De Regimine Principum* (3 vols., Rome, 1607), ii, 338, "moralium autem scientiarum iuuenis et insecutor passionum non est sufficiens auditor. In aetates ergo nimis puerili, quae durat usque ad decimum quartum annum, tales scientiae non sunt proponendae illis: sed à decimoquarto anno ultra si iuvenes se refractent ne passiones et lascivias insequantur, efficiuntur dispositi ut sunt sufficientes auditores moralium, per quae se et alios gubernare cognoscant." For a detailed exposition of the recommended course of study for children between the age of seven and fourteen see *ibid.*, pp. 308–9, pp. 331–8.

¹⁴ Giles's recommendations were usually heeded by medieval educators, ORME, p. 115.

¹⁵ GRIFFITHS, p. 188.

¹⁶ Compare below Part Two, chapter thirteen, p. 151n.

Lancastrian claim to the double monarchy.¹⁷ Bedford's appeal was heeded, and in December 1429, the seven-years-old Henry VI, was crowned king of England.

Henry VI's coronation terminated Gloucester's commission as protector, leaving the duke with the empty title of principal councillor.¹⁸ Yet the coronation also marked the ending of conciliar government and since the boy-king still lacked the discretion to exercise his personal rule, responsibility for the governance of England would have to rest with his advisors in the court, until Henry VI came of age. At court, however, Gloucester could claim pre-eminence before all other lords by virtue of his consanguinity with the king. A year after the council had refuted his title to the regency, Henry VI's premature coronation thus opened an opportunity for Gloucester to assume a position about the king along lines that closely resembled those that may originally have been envisaged for him by the *tutela*-clause in Henry V's last will.

The duke was not able to enjoy that position for long. In spring 1430, Henry VI left England for his French coronation expedition. The ensuing two years the boy king spent on the continent under Beaufort's supervision. To curtail the cardinal's influence on his nephew, Gloucester staffed Henry VI's household with men who enjoyed his full confidence.¹⁹ In the king's absence, Gloucester once more officiated as *custos Anglie*. He employed this function to consolidate his standing in domestic politics. The two years of his lieutenancy witnessed a spate of official investigations into violations of the king's peace; but more particularly they were marked by the government's determined move against Lollardy, culminating in the suppression of Jack Sharpe's rising in the spring of 1431.²⁰ This is no place for a revision of the history of the Lollard persecution of 1431; yet it would seem worth considering whether the clamp-down on heresy during that period was really an expression of the government's "thorough alarm" in view of "a dangerous political and social force capable of widespread national rebellion", or whether the move against Lollardy was, rather, a government initiative intended

¹⁷ ALLMAND, C.T., *Lancastrian Normandy 1415-1450* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 33-6; WOLFFE, pp. 54-5; GRIFFITHS, pp. 189-94.

¹⁸ VICKERS, pp. 216-7; GRIFFITHS, p. 39.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-8; HARRISS, pp. 191-213.

²⁰ *P.P.C.*, iv, 86-91; VICKERS, pp. 222-4; GRIFFITHS, pp. 138-42.

to inspire a sense of joint action among the ecclesiastical lords.²¹ Whether the extirpation of Lollardy was a proof of Gloucester's competence in dealing with an actual political crisis, or an indication of his ability to manipulate public opinion, it enhanced the duke's authority in domestic politics and prepared thus the ground for his coup of February 1432.²²

Early that month, Henry VI returned to England. This provided Gloucester with the long awaited opportunity to shift the site of authority from the council to the court, to assume for himself the role of principal advisor to the boy-king and to exercise, at least in the final years of Henry VI's minority, the office of protector of his nephew's interests that he had been denied in 1422 and 1428. To attain this objective, Gloucester adopted a four-step approach. First, he strengthened his own position in the council. Second, he shifted authority from the council to the royal household. Third, he effected changes in the constitution of the household to secure his ascendance in that new governmental body. Finally, the duke made another determined attempt to remove Henry Beaufort from the centre of English politics.²³

Within days of Henry VI's return, Gloucester forced the chancellor and the treasurer—both stalwart sympathisers of Beaufort—to resign, replacing them with two of his own supporters.²⁴ In the course of February and March 1432, Gloucester supplanted the leading household officers, whom Beaufort had established about the king during the coronation expedition, by men of his own choice. Concurrently, several new appointments to the council were made from among the duke's followers.²⁵ These changes granted the duke a dominant position in the council, and provided him with a handle ultimately to transfer government from this existing centre of authority to the household, as the institutional base of the new court.²⁶

²¹ For the established interpretation see GRIFFITHS, pp. 139–40; VICKERS, pp. 195–6, pp. 221–5; ASTON, M.E., 'Lollardy and Sedition, 1381–1431', *Past & Present*, xvii (1960), 1–44, at p. 24 and WOLFFE, p. 66. The proposal for a revision is inspired by Paul Strohm's reinterpretation of the Oldcastle revolt of 1414 as a staged event intended to enhance the royal authority of Henry V, STROHM, pp. 128–52.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 65–6; VICKERS, p. 223; GRIFFITHS, p. 140.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 41–2; WOLFFE, pp. 67–9; WATTS, pp. 118–20, pp. 155–8.

²⁴ VICKERS, p. 230; HARRISS, pp. 216–7.

²⁵ *R.P.*, v, 433; GRIFFITHS, p. 40, pp. 58–9; WOLFFE, p. 67; WATTS, p. 118, pp. 156–7.

²⁶ WATTS, pp. 156–7.

The coup was rounded off by Gloucester's successful bid for parliamentary legitimisation of his acts. In the spring parliament of 1432, the duke declared his intention to assume, in Bedford's absence, the responsibility for the exercise of government during the remaining years of the king's minority. Gloucester offered not to conclude any state business except with the assent of the lords, or of a majority of them; he invited his hearers to give their best advice and promised that he would abide by it. The lords granted Gloucester's proposal, bidding him to observe his part of the compact to the best of his ability.²⁷ This settlement was strongly reminiscent of the duke's demands in his memorandum of December 1422.²⁸ Gloucester had thus finally attained a role in English politics which came close to the position Henry V may have intended for him ten years earlier, when he had entrusted the duke with the *tutela* of his infant heir. The task now remaining for Gloucester was to break Henry Beaufort's persistent influence on domestic politics.

In May 1427, some eight years after Henry V had denied him this dignity, Beaufort had received the Red Hat from the hands of a compliant Bedford. Concurrently, Beaufort's request to retain Winchester *in commendam* had been granted, and the new cardinal had been made legate for the kingdoms of Bohemia, Germany, and Hungary charged with the management of a crusade against the Hussites.²⁹ In the ensuing two years, Beaufort had first pursued his crusading mission. After his unauthorised deployment of papal troops in the defence of Paris had ruined his prospects at the Curia, the cardinal had, from June 1429 onwards, focused his activities on Lancastrian France.³⁰

Between 1427 and 1432, Beaufort had been to England only twice. On both occasions, Gloucester had been unable to prevent the reassertion of Beaufort's ascendancy and the erosion of his own authority.³¹ By the time he prepared his coup of spring 1432, Gloucester had, therefore, come to the conclusion that only a frontal attack would break his rival's all-pervasive influence. With reference to the cardi-

²⁷ *R.P.*, iv, 389; VICKERS, p. 231.

²⁸ See above, chapter two, pp. 26–9.

²⁹ HARRISS, p. 174.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 181, pp. 184–8, pp. 205–6; HOLMES, G.A., 'Cardinal Beaufort and the Crusade against the Hussites', *EHR*, cccxlix (1973), 721–52, at pp. 739–46.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 183–4; GRIFFITHS, pp. 94–8.

nal's irregular retention of Winchester, and presenting evidence of an earlier attempt on Beaufort's part to purchase an exemption from the jurisdiction of Canterbury, Gloucester in November 1431 managed to persuade the council to open proceedings of *praemunire* and treason against the cardinal.³²

Apparently, Beaufort determined not to return to England for the inquest.³³ Early in 1432, he ordered a secret transfer of his treasure to the Low Countries. Apprised of this unlicensed transaction, Gloucester seized the coffers with the cardinal's gold as they were being loaded onto a ship under cover of night.³⁴ This proved a serious strategic error; for had the cardinal been allowed to slip away with his treasure and build a new career abroad, he would have been permanently removed from English politics. Without his gold, however, Beaufort had no future on the continent. In spring 1432, he therefore returned to England to defend himself against the charges that had been brought against him.³⁵

Proceedings against Beaufort were opened in May 1432. Had Gloucester been able to preserve his initial support in the council and press his charges against the cardinal, Beaufort would have been stripped of his status as bishop of Winchester; he would have forfeited his treasure and his claim to the repayment of his outstanding loans. Yet careful lobbying in the weeks following his return to England re-established Beaufort's standing with the magnates. In July 1432 he was exonerated from the treason charge; the *praemunire*-proceedings were dropped; and his treasure was returned to him on security of a £6,000 deposit.³⁶ Nonetheless, the cardinal's position was seriously weakened, and after the summer of 1432 the prelate considered it opportune temporarily to retire from politics.³⁷

As a result, Gloucester was for the first time since the death of Henry V ascendant in English politics. He employed this position to enforce the objectives which had come to dictate his action in the preceding period: to promote Henry VI's personal rule by providing

³² *P.P.C.*, iii, 323–4, iv, 104–6; VICKERS, pp. 224–6; MACFARLANE, K.B., 'Henry V, Bishop Beaufort and the Red Hat, 1417–1421', in id., *England in the Fifteenth Century*, pp. 79–113, pp. 83–5; HARRISS, pp. 213–5.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 217–8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 218–20.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

the king with an education in the theory of practice of kingship, and to remove the centre of power from the council to the court. These objectives, combined with his undiminished mistrust of Beaufort, were to form the backdrop to Gloucester's political action and cultural patronage in the ensuing decade.

CHAPTER FIVE

EDUCATING HENRY VI. GLOUCESTER'S POLITICAL OBJECTIVES IN THE AFTERMATH OF HIS COUP AND HIS COMMISSION OF LYDGATE'S *FALL OF PRINCES* AND BRUNI'S TRANSLATION OF ARISTOTLE'S *POLITICS*

In the aftermath of his coup, Gloucester had his life peerage confirmed in tail male and he invested large sums in the refurbishment of his magnificent palace at Greenwich. Meanwhile, the duke's political allies were preferred in the distribution of royal patronage.¹ In general, however, there is, as R. Griffiths has noted, "little sign that Gloucester availed himself of the opportunity to mulct the crown of rich pickings". Instead, he persevered in his attempts to consolidate royal finances by careful administration of the feudal rights of the crown.² The duke continued in his endeavour to shift the centre of decision-making from the council to the newly established court, where he himself claimed a prominent position.³ Most important in the context of the present investigation, however, Gloucester persisted in his efforts to educate Henry VI.

Thus one of the *tableaux vivants* which John Lydgate designed at Gloucester's command for the king's entry to London in February 1432 showed a representation of the seven liberal arts with Dame Sapience reminding the king that

Kynges . . . most off excellence,
By me they Regne and moste in Joye endure,
ffor thruh my helpe, and by my besy cure,
To encrease theyre glorie and hyh Renoun,
They shall off wysdome haue ffull possessioun
...
Understondith and lernyth off the wyse,

¹ *P.P.C.*, iv, 136–8; *C.P.R.*, 1429–1436, p. 263, pp. 298–9; GRIFFITHS, p. 95; THOMAS, pp. 167–71.

² GRIFFITHS, pp. 94–6.

³ WATTS, p. 119, pp. 156–7.

On riht Rememberyng the hyh lorde to queme,
Syth ye be Juges other ffolke to deme.⁴

Some eleven months later, the earl of Warwick complained that in his absence the king “had been sturred by some frome his lernyng and spoken to of divers matiers not behovefull”.⁵ The earl did not identify the person who had thus infringed on his prerogative as royal tutor; yet Gloucester’s insistence on his right to see the king in private suggests that Warwick’s criticism was directed against the duke.⁶ The earl’s protest remained fruitless. A memorandum of February 1433, which lists matters of state of which Henry VI should be informed, testifies to continued attempts actively to involve the young king in the administration of government.⁷ Clearly, Gloucester’s central objective in the aftermath of his coup was to provide Henry VI with a solid grounding in the theory and practice of kingship. The duke thus continued his project of educating Henry VI in statecraft, which he seems to have first initiated in 1428.

Yet the late 1420s and early 1430s not only witnessed Gloucester’s temporary political ascendancy but also his emergence as an important literary patron. In 1431 he commissioned John Lydgate with the *Fall of Princes*; in the aftermath of his coup, the duke extended his patronage to the Florentine humanist Leonardo Bruni, charging him with a Latin translation of Aristotle’s *Politics*.⁸ Literary historians have dismissed Gloucester’s patronage of these authors as an expression of his desire to emulate the model of prominent literary patrons such as the duke of Berry or Federigo da Montefeltre.⁹ Thus

⁴ *Chronicles of London*, pp. 105–6; SCHIRMER, *Lydgate*, pp. 142–3; PEARSALL, *Lydgate*, p. 171; WOLFFE, p. 64.

⁵ *P.P.C.*, iv, 135–6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 136–7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, iv, 159–60, HARRISS, p. 231.

⁸ Gloucester’s commission of Lydgate’s *Fall* has been ascribed to May 1431, LYDGATE, J., *The Fall of Princes*, ed. H. BERGEN (4 vols., EETS, cxxi–iv, London, 1924–7), i, x. On the basis of Bruni’s letter of acceptance, which has hitherto been dated to March 1434, the commission of Bruni’s *Politics* has hitherto been dated to late 1433/early 1434, BERTALOT, L., ‘Forschungen über Leonardo Bruni Aretino’, *Archivium Romanicum*, xv (1931), 284–323, p. 313. WEISS, p. 47. By contrast, the present interpretation takes as its point of departure Eduardo Fumagalli’s proposal to redate Bruni’s letter of acceptance to March 1433, FUMAGALLI, E., ‘Review of LUISO, F.P., *Studi sull’ epistolario di Leonardo Bruni*’, *Aevum*, lvi (1982), 343–51, p. 348.

⁹ VICKERS, pp. 351–2, pp. 392–3; LYDGATE, *Fall of Princes*, i, xvi; SCHIRMER, *Frühhumanismus*, p. 40; WEISS, p. 69; PEARSALL, p. 33.

bereft of all that was particular about its timing and content, Gloucester's patronage of the *Fall of Princes* and the *Politics* has had apparently little to contribute to the understanding of his political action. Consequently, political historians have hitherto ignored the duke's literary patronage in their accounts of his brief ascendancy following his coup.¹⁰ In contrast to these established approaches, the following investigation explicitly correlates Gloucester's literary patronage of the early 1430s with his political objectives during that period, and argues that Gloucester's commission of the *Fall of Princes* and the *Politics* translation was immediately connected with his ambitions to precipitate the personal rule of Henry VI. The aim is both to uncover the political motivation for Gloucester's literary patronage and to provide a key for the understanding of the role which Gloucester attributed to the *Fall of Princes* and the *Politics* in the pursuit of his political objectives.

Previous accounts of these commissions have overlooked the fact that Gloucester and his contemporaries would have read both Lydgate's and Bruni's works not so much as literary texts but as instructional treatises on the practice of government. The *Fall of Princes* was an English translation of Laurent de Premierfait's French adaptation of Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*. This collection of stories about the misfortunes which illustrious personages of history and mythology had provoked by egotism, pride and inordinate ambition, aimed to convince worldly rulers of the virtue of wisdom and moderation.¹¹ Intended to offer amusement as well as instruction, Boccaccio's original text, Premierfait's French adaptation, and Lydgate's translation were exemplary of the advice manuals on politics of the late medieval court that are now commonly subsumed under the label of 'mirrors for princes'.¹²

In the same category, yet at the other end of the spectrum, was Aristotle's *Politics*. Indirectly, knowledge of this text had come down to medieval readers through the corpus of Roman political theory and the translation from the Arabic of the pseudo-Aristotelian political

¹⁰ VICKERS, pp. 234–7; GRIFFITHS, pp. 58–60; WOLFFE, pp. 67–9; WATTS, pp. 155–8.

¹¹ LYDGATE, *Fall of Princes*, i, x–xvii.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. xiv; SCHIRMER, *Lydgate*, pp. 208–9; GREEN, p. 147.

manual *Kiṭab sirr al-asrar* (*Secretum Secretorum*) of the early thirteenth century. The reception of these texts by medieval political writers had perpetuated a sense of the importance of Aristotle's analysis of statecraft for the formulation of political theory, whether of a republican or a monarchical orientation.¹³ William Moerbeke's Latin translation of Aristotle's original text in the 1260s reintroduced the *Politics* to the academic canon and spawned scholastic commentaries by Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas/William of Auvergne, and Walter Burley.¹⁴ The decidedly monarchical slant of these scholastic commentaries facilitated exchange between the reception of Aristotle at the universities and the non-academic tradition of his ideas in the advice books on statecraft.¹⁵ Whether they received their knowledge via these 'mirrors for princes' or through the scholastic tradition, late medieval readers would have considered Aristotle as the most authoritative of political theorists and specifically in northern Europe, it would have been presumed that the *Politics* was above all an apology of princely rule and thus the archetype of the 'mirrors for princes' genre.¹⁶

The 'mirrors' were immensely popular in late medieval Europe. Gloucester's collection of at least eighteen different texts of this type was unusual for a fifteenth century English magnate for its size, but not for its contents.¹⁷ Latin and vernacular versions of Giles of Rome's

¹³ RUBINSTEIN, N., 'Marsilius of Padua and Italian Political Thought of his Time', in HALE, J./HIGHFIELD, R./SMALLEY, B. (eds.), *Europe in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1965), pp. 43–75 and SKINNER, Q., *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1978), i, chs. 1–5.

¹⁴ DUNBABIN, J., 'The reception and interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*', in KRETZMANN, N./KENNY, A./PINBORG, J. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 723–37. For the Italian reception of Aristotle as an apologist of republican government see Rubinstein and Skinner.

¹⁵ ORME, pp. 90–93.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97; VICKERS, p. 427, p. 435; WEISS, 20n. The duke owned Latin and French versions of Giles of Rome's *De Regimine*, copies of the *Secretum Secretorum*, Boethius' *De Consolatione* and Valerius Maximus' *De Dictis et Factis Memorabilibus*, a French translation of the anonymous tract *De Administratione Principum*, the treatise *La somme du roi Philippe ou somme des vices et des vertus* by Frère Laurent, Cicero's *De Officiis*, Boccaccio's *De Casibus* and *De Mulieribus Claris*, Walter Burley's commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*, John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, Lapo da Castiglionchio's *Comparatio inter rem militarem et studia litterarum*, Decembrio's translation of Plato's *Republic*, Tito Livio Frulovisi's *De Republica*, Piero da Monte's *De Vitiis et Virtutum Differentia inter se* and Poggio's *De Varietate Fortunae*. These were supplemented by chivalric treatises such as Vegetius' *De Re Militaria* and Nicholas Upton's *De Officio Militarii* and agricultural manuals like the English translation of Palladius' *De Re Rustica*, SAMMUT,

De Regimine Principum and the *Secretum Secretorum* and their derivatives were widely disseminated in aristocratic circles.¹⁸ James Yonge's English translation of the *Secretum* was produced for James Botiller, earl of Ormond and lieutenant of Ireland; a vernacular version of another popular compendium of advice, the *Dicta et Opiniones Diversorum Philosophorum*, was executed for Sir John Fastolf.¹⁹ The advice books were popular because their authors and their readers concurred in the opinion that the theories propounded in these texts were immediately relevant to the everyday practice of politics.²⁰ Addressing himself to Henry V, Thomas Hoccleve wrote in his *Regement of Princes*:

And although it be no maner of nede
Yow to counseile what to done or leve,
Yf that you liste of stories to take hede,
Somewhat it may profite, by your leve.²¹

Some twenty years later, Gloucester stated, with reference to Pier Candido Decembrio's translation of Plato's *Republic*: "instituturimus, seu domi seu militie fuerimus eos [libros] numquam a nostro latere discedere . . . Sintque nobis quasi comites ac consultores vite degende."²² That such statements were no empty rhetoric for Gloucester, is testified by the importance he seems, in 1425/6, to have attributed to the *Serpent of Division* for the definition and expression of his political objectives.²³ The duke did not stand alone in his appreciation of the practical value of political theory; for 'mirrors for princes' were not only read by an adult audience but also used in the education of aristocratic children.²⁴ Indeed the description of such texts

pp. 44–5, p. 64, p. 69, p. 79, p. 81, p. 83, p. 87, p. 84, pp. 100–1, p. 107, p. 123, p. 127, p. 132.

¹⁸ The *Tractatus* is printed in GENET, J.P. (ed.), *Four Political Tracts of the Later Middle Ages* (Camden Soc., 4th ser., xviii, London, 1977), 53–168. On the circulation of 'mirrors for princes' in fifteenth century England see GREEN, pp. 135–67.

¹⁹ For Yonge's translation see *Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum*, ed. R. STEELE, (EETS, lxxiv, London, 1898), 121–248 and FERSTER, J., *Fictions of Advice. The Literature and Politics of Counsel in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia, 1996), pp. 55–61. On the *Dicta* see WATTS, p. 55. On other works in this genre executed for members of the aristocracy see DOYLE, pp. 172–7.

²⁰ GREEN, pp. 141–2; WATTS, pp. 16–31.

²¹ HOCCELEVE, T., *The Regement of Princes*, ed. F.J. FURNIVALL (EETS, lxxii, London, 1897), 78, ll. 2136–9.

²² SAMMUT, p. 187, ll. 24–26, ll. 29–30 (Gloucester to P.C. Decembrio, March 1439).

²³ Above, chapter three.

²⁴ ORME, p. 89, pp. 94–7.

as ‘mirrors for princes’ had a concrete grounding in reality: since the early thirteenth century, every French king had a mirror written for him; the most famous was Giles of Rome’s *De Regimine*, which had been composed for Philip the Fair.²⁵

Significantly, it had been the Lancastrians who had introduced this French practice to England. The *Regement of Princes*, a synthesis of the *Secretum Secretorum*, Giles of Rome’s *De Regimine*, and James de Cessolis’ *De Ludo Scaccorum*, which Hoccleve composed for Henry V, has already been mentioned. Henry V was also the dedicatee of a poem by Thomas Elmham, which purported to reiterate advice on statecraft which Henry IV had allegedly delivered orally on his deathbed.²⁶ Henry VI was the recipient of several ‘mirrors’, including the anonymous tract *De Regimine Principum* and two different English translations of the *Secretum*. Edward IV, finally, was presented with Fortescue’s *De Laudibus*, and George Ashby’s *Active Policy of a Prince*.²⁷

It is here proposed, that Gloucester continued this family tradition when he commissioned the *Fall of Princes* and the *Politics* translation. Lydgate stated in the *Fall* that Gloucester had chosen the Boccaccio/Premierfait text for translation because of its rich didactic potential for “pryncis”.²⁸ Lydgate failed to identify these “pryncis”; the Italian humanist Lapo da Castiglionchio was more explicit. In 1437, Castiglionchio sent Gloucester a copy of his *Comparatio inter Rem Militarem et Studia Litterarum*, a study that bridged the gap between the ‘mirrors for princes’-literature and popular chivalric treatises.²⁹ In his covering letter, the humanist wrote:

Mitto etiam cum hoc opusculo tres Isocratis, Atheniensis clarissimi rhetoris, orationes: in quarum una iuvenem quendam ad virtutes instruit, quam tibi [Gloucester] idcirco convenire putavi, quod tibi regis nepo-

²⁵ Ibid., p. 90.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 101. For discussions of the ‘mirrors’ for Henry V see FERSTER, pp. 137–59; STROHM, pp. 196–214. Compare also above, chapter three, pp. 40–41.

²⁷ GENET, pp. 40–7; GREEN, p. 76, p. 141.

²⁸ LYDGATE, *Fall of Princes*, i, 11–2 (Prologue), ll. 422–7.

This said[e] prynce considred off resoun,
the noble book off this Iohn Bochas
Was, accordyng in his opynyoun,
Off gret noblesse and reputacioun,
And onto pryncis gretli necessarie
To yive exauple how this world doth varie.

²⁹ SCHIRMER, *Frühhumanismus*, pp. 31–3; WEISS, pp. 50–1; SAMMUT, pp. 26–7.

tis cura tui suscepta sit, quem ita erudire desideres, ut patri suo ac tui simillimus sit.³⁰

The statements of Castiglionchio and Lydgate suggest that Gloucester's commission of the *Fall of Princes* and the *Politics* translation was not, as has traditionally been assumed, motivated by nebulous ideas of his own glory as literary patron but by the concrete desire to provide Henry VI with instruction manuals on the art of government that were specifically geared towards the needs of the young king.³¹ This would also explain the duke's request for the introduction of envoys to the most important *exempla* in the *Fall of Princes*, which have hitherto been vaguely attributed to Gloucester's personal taste.³² Lydgate reported that when he had submitted the first instalment of his translation to Gloucester some time in 1432, the duke had determined that the text's instructive message required stronger emphasis than in Premierfait's version:

My lord [Gloucester] cam forbi, and gan to taken heede;
This mythi prynce, riht manli & riht wis,
Gaff me charge in his prudent auys,
That I sholde in eueri tragedie,
Afftir the processe made mencionun,
At the ende sette a remedie,
With a lenvoie conueied be resoun,
And afftir that, with humble affeccionun,
To noble pryncis lowli it directe,
Bi othres fallyng [thei myht] themsilff correcte.³³

Significantly, Gloucester's argument for the insertion of these concise summaries of key-passages, reiterated almost verbatim the curricular guidelines for Henry VI that had been laid down in 1428.³⁴ Therefore, it is here proposed that the duke's request for the addition

³⁰ SAMMUT, p. 167. Castiglionchio must have derived the information on Gloucester's educational ambitions from the duke's middleman in Italy, Zanone da Castiglione, on whom below, Part Two, chapter thirteen.

³¹ For the traditional interpretation compare VICKERS, pp. 352–3, pp. 391–3; WEISS, pp. 47–8; MORTIMER, pp. 60–5 RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 138–40.

³² For these interpolations see LYDGATE, *Fall*, i, xvi–vii; HAMMOND, E.P., 'Poet and Patron in the *Fall of Princes*: Lydgate and Humphrey of Gloucester', *Anglia*, xxxviii, n.s. 26 (1914), 121–36; id., 'Lydgate and Coluccio Salutati', *Modern Philology*, xxv (1927–8), 49–57; LUCAS, P.J., 'The Growth and Development of English Literary Patronage in the Later Middle Ages and Early Renaissance', *The Library*, 6th ser., iv, 3 (1982), pp. 219–48, at p. 233; MORTIMER, pp. 64–83.

³³ LYDGATE, *Fall of Princes*, i, 203–4, ll. 145–53; GREEN, pp. 147–8.

³⁴ Above, chapter four, pp. 49–51.

of the envoys to the *Fall of Princes* was dictated by his desire to adapt this text to the requirements of the classroom and the intellectual capacities of the ten-year-old Henry VI.³⁵

It is easy to see how the *Fall of Princes*, with its rich repository of dramatic 'human interest' stories, might have been used as a means gently to introduce the boy-king to the first principles of statecraft. Gloucester's choice of the rigorously analytical *Politics* as a companion-piece to Lydgate's work and as a textbook for his young nephew, is less obvious. It has been mentioned above that Aristotle's work was considered a superior model for medieval political advice literature. Gloucester's willingness to go *ad fontes* had already become apparent in 1422 in his search for records on William Marshall's regency for his memorandum.³⁶ The same willingness to go back to the sources may explain why the duke, intent on offering Henry VI the best education possible, determined to provide his nephew with Aristotle's original text rather than any of its derivatives. The problem was that the existing translations of the *Politics* were hardly suited to Gloucester's requirements.

Moerbeke's authoritative rendering of the *Politics* was indebted to medieval concepts of translation. To represent Aristotle's text as faithfully as possible, Moerbeke had translated word for word; he had preserved the Greek sentence structure and even occasional Greek terms which had no exact Latin equivalent.³⁷ As a result, whole passages of this transliteration were barely intelligible, and even academic readers depended on the scholastic commentaries to obtain a grasp of the intended meaning of Aristotle's text.³⁸ Gloucester may have possessed the *Politics* commentary by Aquinas and William of Auvergne, and we know that he owned the commentary of Walter Burley, which followed Aquinas almost verbatim.³⁹ Whether the duke was able to read these texts unaided is uncertain; probably he relied on a university-educated clerk to help him grapple with these aca-

³⁵ Taking this argument one step further, it seems conceivable that Gloucester wished for a versified rendering of the prose text by Boccaccio/Premierfait in order to facilitate memorisation. On the role of memorisation in the education of children and adolescents see ORME, N., *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London, 1973), pp. 87–115, p. 124.

³⁶ Above, chapter two, pp. 26–9.

³⁷ DUNBABIN, p. 723.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 723–4.

³⁹ SAMMUT, p. 85, p. 87.

demic expositions.⁴⁰ Aware that neither the Moerbeke translation nor the scholastic commentaries on the *Politics* would be suitable as textbooks for his adolescent nephew, Gloucester may, therefore, have cast about for alternatives.

The fourteenth century *Politics* commentary of Guy of Rimini, which apparently aimed at a non-academic audience, and the annotated translation of Moerbeke's text into French, which Nicole Oresme had undertaken around 1370, might have offered a less academic approach to Aristotle's text; yet these works are not listed in the surviving inventories of Gloucester's books and it is impossible to establish whether the duke had any knowledge of them.⁴¹ Some time in the late 1420s or early 1430s, Gloucester did, however, come across Leonardo Bruni's new translation of Aristotle's *Ethics* (1416/17).⁴² Previously, this text had been available only in the mid-thirteenth century version by Robert Grosseteste, which was based on similar principles of translation as Moerbeke's rendering of the *Politics*. Bruni's *Ethics* translation marked a radical departure from these established principles.⁴³ Commenting on Moerbeke's version of the *Politics*, Bruni wrote in the programmatic introduction to his own work:

Est enim plena interpretatio eius talium ac maiorum absurditatum et delirationum, per quas omnis intellectus et claritas illorum librorum miserabiliter transformatur fiuntque ii libri ex suavibus asperi, ex formosis deformes, ex elegantibus intricati, ex sonoris absoni et pro palaestra et oleo lacrimabilem suscipiunt rusticitatem.⁴⁴

Against this negative foil, Bruni expounded his guidelines for a new method of translation. He pleaded for an approach that aimed not only at conveying the content of a given text, but also tried to find

⁴⁰ As a cadet prince, Gloucester may have had enjoyed at least the elements of an academic training before he joined Henry V in France, VICKERS, pp. 8–9. On the high educational standard of some members of the English aristocracy ORME, *Childhood to Chivalry*, pp. 146–7; on the aristocratic practice of relying on the help of clerks for the reading of difficult texts *ibid.*, pp. 90–91.

⁴¹ Guy of Rimini and Oresme were apparently unknown in England during Gloucester's lifetime, *ibid.*, pp. 90–1. On these texts see DUNBABIN, pp. 729–32.

⁴² WEISS, R., 'Leonardo Bruni Aretino and Early English Humanism', *Modern Languages Review*, xxxvi (1941), 443–8, at pp. 445–7; SAMMUT, p. 147.

⁴³ HARTH, H., 'Leonardo Brunis Selbstverständnis als Übersetzer', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 1 (1967), 41–63.

⁴⁴ BRUNI, L., *De interpretatione recta* (c. 1420) (second introduction to Bruni's translation of the *Ethics*), printed in BARON, H., *Leonardo Bruni Aretino. Humanistisch-Philosophische Schriften* (Leipzig, Berlin, 1928), pp. 81–96, at p. 96.

an adequate equivalent for its specific rhetorical form; for, Bruni argued, it was the confluence of content and form which constituted the meaning of a text and made it fully available to the reader, who could then apply the theoretical insights he had gained from the text to his action.⁴⁵

Clearly, Bruni's bid to liberate Aristotle from the confines of academic discussion and to reclaim his original message for practical application in politics would have appealed to an educated statesman like Gloucester. Enthusiastic about his translation of the *Ethics*, Gloucester therefore commissioned Bruni with the production of a new translation of the *Politics* and in view of his political objectives during this period and his contemporary commission of the *Fall of Princes*, it seems highly likely that Gloucester's patronage of Bruni's translation was inspired by the duke's wish to use Bruni's rendering of the *Politics* as a personal instruction manual for Henry VI.⁴⁶

Even the most accommodating translation, however, would not have been able to gloss over the fact that the theoretical approach to statecraft of the *Politics* would put higher demands on Henry VI's intellect than the discursive and event-oriented *Fall of Princes*. Yet when Gloucester commissioned the *Politics* translation in the summer of 1433, he may have gauged that by the time Bruni had completed the first sections of the translation, Henry VI would be old enough to be weaned from the edifying *exempla* of the *Fall of Princes* and receptive to the more rigorous Aristotelian analysis of politics.⁴⁷ Besides, Gloucester may have hoped that his nephew would be initiated to the *Politics* by the one man who would be most familiar with the difficulties of the text. Together with his commission with the translation, Bruni himself appears to have received an invitation from Gloucester to come to England.⁴⁸ Hitherto, it has been inferred that the duke had offered Bruni a position in his own household; it seems, however, equally likely that the duke had hoped to recruit Bruni as private tutor for Henry VI.⁴⁹ In that case, Bruni would have been

⁴⁵ HARTH, p. 55, p. 63.

⁴⁶ SAMMUT, p. 147, ll. 39–45.

⁴⁷ Originally Gloucester appears to have stipulated that Bruni should send his translation in instalments, SAMMUT, p. 147, ll. 44–6. In the event, the duke received the translation only some six years later. On Gloucester's relations with Bruni see *ibid.*, pp. 27–8, pp. 31–4; WEISS, pp. 47–9.

⁴⁸ SAMMUT, p. 146, ll. 14–8.

⁴⁹ WEISS, p. 41; SCHIRMER, p. 20–22; RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', p. 119.

accorded the same role as the famous authors of 'mirrors', whom the French kings of the fourteenth century had employed as teachers of their children, and he would have been expected to fulfil similar functions at the English court to those of his friend Guarino da Verona at the court of Ferrara, where the humanist pedagogue supervised the education of the d'Este children.⁵⁰

Gloucester's selection of specific texts and particular translations that were best suited to his educational purposes, contradicts the established notion that the duke's interest in literature was superficial, and that his bibliophilia exhausted itself in the possession of coffee-table books with prestigious titles. Instead Gloucester emerges as a discerning reader with a live interest in political theory. His solicitude for the pedagogical utility of the text, which is particularly obvious in his request for the envoys in the *Fall of Princes*, points to an active concern for education and foreshadows Gloucester's later involvement in the promotion of learning at Oxford. That the duke apparently conceived Lydgate's and Bruni's texts as mutually complementary works, does not, as has hitherto been asserted, betray his lack of appreciation for the alleged superiority of the Italian Renaissance to the medieval tradition of northern Europe. Rather it testifies to Gloucester's ability freely to combine the most advanced expressions of northern European culture with the most recent

Bruni's reply to Gloucester of March 1433 is too vague to allow for a clear interpretation, compare SAMMUT, p. 146, ll. 14–20, "Laudes vero et commendationes et oblata eisdem in litteris perscripta tanti facio, ut nec maius quicquam existimem nec praestantius. Atque utinam vel conditio temporum vel aetas mea pateretur, ut invitamenta illa benigna per adventum meum ad istas partes impleri valerent! Nullum unquam iter libentius suscepissem. Sed quoniam impedimenta subsunt permulta quidem atque legitima, quod reliquum est, studiis atque litteris conversationem suppleamus."

⁵⁰ On the French practice of employing the authors of 'mirrors for princes' as tutors see GREEN, pp. 150–1. See also Green's observations on the distribution of responsibilities between two teachers for the teaching of the chivalric arts and letters at the Burgundian court in the mid-fifteenth century, *ibid.*, pp. 74–5. Could it be possible that Gloucester envisaged a similar specialisation for the education of Henry VI and that he had hoped to entrust Bruni with the teaching of "lettrure" (i.e. political theory), whereas Warwick was to continue as teacher of "nurture", i.e. chivalric practice? On Guarino as teacher of the d'Este children see SABBADINI, R., *Vita di Guarino Veronese* (Genova, 1891), pp. 88–121. Gloucester's request that the Florentine chancellor should abandon Florence for service in England would hence not, as RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', p. 119, suggests, have "smacked of aristocratic arrogance", instead Gloucester would have offered Bruni a position whose status was—at least from an English perspective—ininitely more honourable than that of a city-clerk.

productions of the Italian avantgarde. Finally, interpreted as a direct continuation of strategies of political action he had adopted in the late 1420s, Gloucester's patronage of Lydgate and Bruni was a further indication of his pragmatic approach to literature and learning, which had first manifested itself in the duke's commission of the *Serpent of Division*. Previous scholars have cast this pragmatic approach as a superficial utilitarianism which betrayed Gloucester's lack of understanding of the deeper concerns of Italian humanism. The present study maintains that Gloucester's pragmatism testified to his integrated conception of the relationship between practice and theory and argues that it may have been precisely this understanding of the interrelation between literature and life that made the duke susceptible to the humanists' celebration of the *vita activa*.

Apparently Gloucester's efforts to sharpen Henry VI's awareness of his royal sovereignty were crowned by success; for late in November 1432 Warwick reported to the council that "the Kyng is growen in . . . conceyte and knowleche of his hiegh and royale autoritee and estate".⁵¹ Gloucester's educational experiment might thus have marked a promising beginning for the rule of Henry VI. Yet it never reached fruition, for in July 1433 it was brought to an abrupt end by the return of John, duke of Bedford to England.

⁵¹ *P.P.C.*, iv, 134.

CHAPTER SIX

STRUGGLING FOR THE KING'S CONFIDENCE. GLOUCESTER'S ROLE IN ENGLISH POLITICS 1433 TO 1437 AND HIS COMMISSION OF FRULOVISI'S *VITA* *HENRICI QUINTI* AND THE *HUMFROIDOS*

In the aftermath of his coup Gloucester had attempted to consolidate royal revenue. These attempts had, however, been doomed to failure because the duke had not been able to meet the cost of the French war. Unable to support the full scale protection of Lancastrian France, Gloucester, late in 1432, had given the defence of Calais strategic priority over other assignments. Yet the financial situation had further deteriorated, and in April 1433, the Exchequer had had to declare its bankruptcy.¹

Anxious to secure the defence of Lancastrian France, Bedford returned to England in July 1433, where he took automatic precedence over Gloucester as principal councillor.² In that function, the elder duke presided at the summer parliament of 1433. In the ensuing months, he successfully asserted his authority. Late in 1433, parliament accepted his demand for an extension of his prerogative; in return, Bedford agreed to the request of the commons that he should remain in England.³ The following weeks saw the systematic revocation of the reforms which Gloucester had introduced since February 1432. Henry VI was removed from the centre of power; and the educational programme which Gloucester had devised for him was apparently discontinued.⁴ Bedford shifted authority, which his younger brother had conferred upon the king and his court, back to the council. In turn, the councillors agreed to abide by Bedford's "advys" in all important matters of domestic policy, thus investing Bedford

¹ GRIFFITHS, pp. 117-8, p. 120; HARRISS, pp. 223-4.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 227-8; VICKERS, pp. 237-8; WILLIAMS, E.C., pp. 211-9; GRIFFITHS, pp. 194-5.

³ *R.P.*, iv, 423-5; VICKERS, pp. 239-41; GRIFFITHS, pp. 43-4; WOLFFE, pp. 72-3; HARRISS, pp. 227-31.

⁴ *R.P.*, iv, 423-4; *P.P.C.*, iv, 259-60; GRIFFITHS, p. 60; WOLFFE, pp. 74-75; HARRISS, p. 231; WATTS, p. 121.

with powers similar to those he had been granted in 1426.⁵ As effective regent in England, the elder duke concentrated, in the following months, on fund-raising for the defence of Lancastrian France. Faced with the dire state of royal finances, Bedford again relied on Cardinal Beaufort for support. In return for several generous loans, Beaufort was readmitted to the council; and within a few months, the cardinal resumed his place at the centre of power, benefiting once more handsomely from royal patronage.⁶

Predictably, Bedford's measures provoked Gloucester's protest; yet the younger duke proved unable to dent his elder brother's superior authority. His proposal to use Beaufort's impounded treasure to finance a large army that was to deal a mortal blow to the forces of Charles VII was dismissed by the council under Bedford's presidency.⁷ In the course of 1434, the defence of Calais was subordinated to the protection of Normandy; to fund this venture, the revenue of the duchy of Lancaster was fully assigned to the French war.⁸ In the late summer of 1434, Bedford returned to Normandy. As in 1427, the elder duke reaffirmed the authority of the council before his departure; and as on that earlier occasion, Gloucester found himself powerless against this settlement.⁹ A year passed before the younger duke was given another chance to reassert his authority in English politics and to shift power back to Henry VI. Late in August 1435, a great Anglo-French peace conference at Arras ended in an impasse. Three weeks later, the duke of Burgundy forsook his alliance with the English and signed a truce with Charles VII. Bedford did not live to witness the Burgundian defection. Having suffered from ill health for some time, he had died at Rouen on 15 September 1435.

Bedford's death removed one of Gloucester's principal rivals from English politics and left the younger duke as heir presumptive to the throne. Meanwhile, Beaufort was discredited by the failure of the congress of Arras, where he had unofficially led the English delega-

⁵ HARRISS, p. 231; WATTS, p. 121.

⁶ HARRISS, pp. 229-52; GRIFFITHS, pp. 98-100.

⁷ *P.P.C.*, iv, 213-6; VICKERS, pp. 242-4; WOLFFE, pp. 76-7; HARRISS, pp. 236-7, p. 254.

⁸ *P.P.C.*, iv, 222-9; HARRISS, pp. 237-8.

⁹ *P.P.C.*, iv, 243-4, 287-9; WOLFFE, pp. 78-80; HARRISS, p. 242; WATTS, pp. 121-2.

tion, and by the breakdown of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance, of which he had been the key architect. The autumn of 1435 therefore witnessed the decline of Beaufort's authority and Gloucester's return to the centre of power.¹⁰

As in 1432/3, the duke focused, in the ensuing months, on enforcing the sovereignty of Henry VI. Evidence from the council records suggests the gradual inauguration of the king's personal rule from October 1435 onwards.¹¹ In foreign policy, Gloucester promoted a rigorously anti-Burgundian policy. This is usually attributed to the duke's concern for English trade interests in the Channel, to his hope at last to realise his territorial ambitions in the Low Countries, and to Gloucester's desire to style himself as valorous defender of Lancastrian interests against Burgundy and France.¹² Such motives certainly played a role in Gloucester's policy. Yet, if it is accepted that the domestic crusade against Lollardy of 1431 may have been staged by Gloucester in order to inspire a sense of joint action in the ecclesiastical lords, it is possible to interpret the anti-Burgundian propaganda effort, which the duke's government orchestrated in winter 1435/6, as an analogous attempt to forge an alliance between Gloucester, the secular lords, and the people by involving them in a campaign against an external enemy.¹³

In the late summer of 1436, the Burgundians laid siege to Calais. Early in August, Gloucester crossed to Calais at the head of a sizeable force only to find upon arrival that the siege had already been lifted. Cheated of his triumph, Gloucester diverted his troops and led them on a ten-days' *chevauchée* through Flanders, thus providing a welcome outlet for the anti-Burgundian sentiment that had been brought to fever pitch in the preceding months. At their return to England late in August, Gloucester and his troops met with an enthusiastic reception;

¹⁰ VICKERS, p. 247; HARRISS, pp. 253–4.

¹¹ GRIFFITHS, pp. 231–2; WATTS, pp. 128–9.

¹² VICKERS, pp. 319–20; WEISS, R., 'Humphrey Duke of Gloucester and Tito Livio Frulovisi', in GORDON, D.J. (ed.), *Fritz Saxl 1890–1948. A Volume of Memorial Essays from his Friends in England* (London, 1957), pp. 218–227, at pp. 222–4; HOLMES, G.A., 'The Libel of English Policy', *EHR*, ccxcix (1961), 193–216, pp. 207–11; THOMAS, pp. 218–20.

¹³ For Gloucester's anti-Burgundian propaganda effort in 1435/6 see DOIG, J.A., 'Propaganda, Public Opinion and the Siege of Calais in 1436', in ARCHER, R.E. (ed.), *Crown, Government and People in the Fifteenth Century* (The Fifteenth Century ser., ii, Stroud and New York, 1995), pp. 79–106.

and in the following months, the duke enjoyed unprecedented popularity in England.¹⁴

While Gloucester triumphed in the field and at home, his “poeta et orator”, the Italian humanist Tito Livio Frulovisi composed, at the duke’s request, a biography of Henry V and a panegyric on Gloucester’s military exploits in Flanders. Hitherto, Frulovisi’s *Vita Henrici Quinti* and the *Humfroidos* have been read as an expression of Gloucester’s desire for self-aggrandisement as military commander on the model of Henry V.¹⁵ Alternatively, Frulovisi’s works have been interpreted in the context of the anti-Burgundian propaganda campaign of 1435/6 as elements of Gloucester’s scheme to win conciliar and popular support for his anti-Burgundian foreign policy.¹⁶ Yet, by contrast with the anonymous *Libel of English Policy* and popular xenophobic jingles of that period, Frulovisi’s texts were not intended for a popular or a conciliar audience but for Henry VI and a courtly readership. The *Vita* was explicitly dedicated to Henry VI, and although the sole surviving copy of the *Humfroidos* lacks such a dedication, the contents of Frulovisi’s panegyric show that it was clearly designed as a companion-piece to the *Vita*.¹⁷ For this reason, the following discussion examines Frulovisi’s texts not with regard to Gloucester’s military ambitions nor his propaganda efforts, but analyses them as sources for the understanding of the duke’s expectations in Henry VI at the beginning of the king’s personal rule. It looks at the way in which the duke envisioned his relations with the king and his own future role in domestic politics, and asks in how far his ideas represented a continuation of Gloucester’s earlier policy. Such a reading can elucidate the duke’s motives for commissioning the *Vita* and the *Humfroidos*. At the same time it may contribute to the understanding of the principles that guided Gloucester’s political action in 1436/7.

Tito Livio Frulovisi, a former pupil of Guarino da Verona, entered Gloucester’s service some time in 1436, possibly on the recommendation of the papal collector in England, Piero da Monte.¹⁸ Frulovisi’s

¹⁴ VICKERS, pp. 248–54; GRIFFITHS, pp. 203–5; THOMAS, pp. 212–20.

¹⁵ WEISS, ‘Frulovisi’, pp. 222–4; ROSSI, pp. 16–25.

¹⁶ HOLMES, ‘Libel’, p. 213; DOIG, p. 102.

¹⁷ Discussed in detail below, pp. 75–7.

¹⁸ Frulovisi’s career prior to his stay in England is discussed below, Part Three, chapter nineteen, pp. 255–8. For da Monte’s role as a middleman between Gloucester and Frulovisi see below, Part Two, chapter fourteen, p. 183n.

duties as 'poeta et orator' in Gloucester's household seem to have been similar to those of the court humanists Pier Candido Decembrio or Flavio Biondo in the service of the Visconti or the king of Aragon.¹⁹ During his two years' stay in England, Frulovisi not only took care of Gloucester's Latin correspondence but also produced several literary works for the duke.²⁰

In the *Vita Henrici Quinti*, which Frulovisi composed at Gloucester's request in 1436, Henry V is depicted as a charismatic leader, who enjoyed the unconditional support of the nobility and the populace at large.²¹ In accordance with existing Lancastrian propaganda, the conquest of France is cast as an almost messianic vocation and the victory of Agincourt is presented as proof of divine affirmation of Henry's action.²² Henry V's premature death had left it to his son, whose birth had been announced (*evangelizatus*) to the hero king during his last victorious military campaign, to consummate Lancastrian destiny.²³ In his dedication of the *Vita* to Henry VI, Frulovisi explicitly recommended the exemplar of Henry V's strong kingship as a role-model for the young king and as an encouragement to Henry VI, at the beginning of his personal rule, to assert and exercise his independent royal authority.²⁴ The *Vita* thus reiterated the leit-motif of Gloucester's policy since 1428, that is the enforcement of Henry VI's sovereignty. At the same time, Frulovisi's text continued

¹⁹ For Frulovisi's 'job description' see his letter of denization of March 1437, RYMER, x, 661–2; WEISS, 'Frulovisi', pp. 224–5.

²⁰ Below, Part Three, chapter nineteen, pp. 256–7.

²¹ Since it has been impossible to get hold of St. JOHN, H.L., 'A Critical Edition of the *Vita Henrici Quinti* of Tito Livio Frulovisi' (Toronto Univ., Ph.D. thesis, 1982), the present examination is based on FRULOVISI, T.L., *Titi Livii Foro-Julienstis Vita Henrici Quinti Regis Angliae*, ed. T. HEARNE (Oxford, 1716). The whole text is a celebration of Henry V's leadership qualities, for particularly pointed descriptions see for instance p. 5, pp. 16–7, pp. 22–3, pp. 31–3, pp. 63–4, pp. 84–5.

²² Ibid., pp. 15–22. Henry V's quasi-messianic role is further emphasised throughout the text by his appellation as "rex divinus", e.g. p. 3, "rex christianissimus", p. 7, p. 10, or by descriptions of his religious observance, e.g., p. 5, pp. 6–7, pp. 22–3, p. 95. For the existing tradition see HARRISS, G.L., 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), in id. (ed.), *Henry V: The Practice of Kingship* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 1–29; ALLMAND, *Henry V*, pp. 404–25 and STROHM, *passim*.

²³ *Vita*, pp. 2–3, p. 5, p. 93.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 2–3, "... regis [Henry V] hanc invictissimi vitam et praeclara gesta patris ad filium te regem Christianissimum, cuius tibi mores imitandos maxime nationes omnes sperant descripsi. Non quod ego tibi bella paci praeferam, sed... pacem honestam habere nequeas, iis artibus, quibus suos et tuos hostes pater domuit, eisdem virtuteque belli cum victoria simili regnis tuis pacem et quietem querens, divinam tibi regem cunctis in rebus imitandus proponas."

Gloucester's educational programme for his nephew; for, as an intensely personal 'mirror' for Henry VI, the biography of his father complemented Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* and Bruni's translation of the *Politics*.

Similar continuities characterise Frulovisi's representation of Henry VI's future relations with Gloucester. Addressing himself to the king, Frulovisi asserted in the exordium of the *Vita*:

Audiebam te vix duorum annorum tanto regi superstitem, praeclarissimo principi Humfredo Gloucestriae duci, tuo patruo, tutelae relictum, qui et ipse Henrico patri frater è quatuor natu minor filius pietate et nomine à rege dictus suis disciplinis eruditus, spectator omnium tanti regis gestorum, imitator adjutorque fuerat; qui te summa pietate fideque nutriebat, ita ut alter à Lycurgo Lacedaemoniorum regis Pollibite fratre versus regem nepotem nutriendum integritate et fide per universum orbem praedicetur. Hunc et Humfredum ducem in literarum et omnium humanarum divinarumque rerum studiis ceteros principes quantum est qui vivant superantem. Hinc amor itineris, hinc tanti labores, hinc pecuniarum mearum consumptio, vel, ut verius loquar, et in patria totius, quamquam non mediocris, emolumenti mei extra ciminum, regnum hoc ad patruum adii, qui me nutrit et honestavit satis.²⁵

Gloucester is here presented in three different roles: as *tutor* of his infant nephew, an office which he had claimed during the minority of Henry VI; as educator of the adolescent king, a function which Gloucester had assumed from 1428 onwards; and finally, as elder statesman, who generously received a young man, who had turned to him for support, into his *familia*, a position which Gloucester appears to have sought for in his future relations with his royal nephew at the beginning of the king's personal rule.

The theme of family bonds and mutual trust in this opening passage is powerfully reiterated in the most emotive scene of the *Vita*, a description of how Henry V had saved Gloucester's life during the battle of Agincourt:

Ecce dum impetu valido regis frater serenissimus Humfredus Gloucestriae dux incautius forte pugnaret, in illis mucrone transfixus, semianimis ad terram prosternitur: ipse vero rex frater Humfredi cruribus intra suos pedes repositis. Ceciderat namque dux inclitus ad suos obverso capite, sed pedibus ad hostes, ubi rex diu fortissime pugnans frater fratrem ab hostibus tutatus inter suos reportari fecit.²⁶

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 1–2.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

The use of the adjective *tutatus* in this passage establishes a connection between this central scene and the references to the *tutela*-clause in Henry V's deathbed provisions at the beginning and at the end of the *Vita*.²⁷ Henry V had protected Gloucester, when he had been as helpless as a child; in turn, it is implied, the duke had felt unconditionally bound to exercise the *tutela* of his brother's infant son. Clearly, the duke was anxious to draw attention to his past exertions on his nephew's behalf, and wished to recommend himself as paternal advisor to the young king, as he was beginning to feel his way into royal office.

Gloucester's vision of his own role in Henry VI's future government is formulated even more pointedly in Frulovisi's *Humfroidos*, a verse panegyric in 1140 hexameters, which describes the breakdown of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance in 1435/6, the liberation of Calais, and Gloucester's Flemish *chevauchée*.²⁸ The *Humfroidos* continues themes that had been introduced in the *Vita*. Gloucester's portrait in the panegyric as a charismatic military leader enjoying popular sympathy and commanding the respect of the magnates is reminiscent of the characterisation of Henry V in the *Vita*.²⁹ The description of the duke's emphatic appeal for the liberation of Calais echoes the record of Henry V's passionate speech before Agincourt.³⁰ Finally, the account of Gloucester's enthusiastic reception upon his return from Flanders recalls the description of Henry V's triumphal arrival at Dover in 1415 in the *Vita*.³¹

Because of these analogies, it has been assumed that the *Humfroidos* intended to portray Gloucester as a worthy successor to Henry V's

²⁷ The closing passage runs *ibid.*, p. 95, "Testamento tamen ante tui tutelam primasque defensiones et curam Humfredo Gloucestriæ duci, serenissimo tuo patruo, qui te summa fide tuaque tutatus est ad hos dies quibus te florentem et faustum videmus."

²⁸ The only copy of the 'Humfroidos' has survived in Seville, Biblioteca Colombina, MS 7.2.23, ff. 64r–86r, described by WEISS, 'Frulovisi', p. 221. All subsequent quotations from the 'Humfroidos' are based on this manuscript. Comprehension of Frulovisi's extremely difficult text was greatly facilitated by the 'Reflexions on the work of a certain Tito Livio di Forlì by one who is of opinion that either the aforesaid Tito or he himself should never have been born', anonymous typescript preserved with a transcript of the *Humfroidos* among the papers of R. Weiss in the Warburg Institute, London NAH 8320.

²⁹ 'Humfroidos', ff. 80r–81r; for the relevant passages in the *Vita* see above, pp. 73–4.

³⁰ 'Humfroidos', f. 81v; *Vita*, pp. 16–7.

³¹ 'Humfroidos', f. 85r–v; *Vita*, pp. 22–3.

legacy.³² This interpretation is, however, not borne out by the text; on the contrary, throughout the *Humfroidos*, Frulovisi took painstaking care to present the duke not as Henry V's sovereign heir, but as faithful executor of his late brother's dying wishes. From beginning to end of the Flanders raid, the English army had, according to the *Humfroidos*, been accompanied by an eagle high up in the sky.³³ In Lancastrian mythology, the eagle functioned as central symbol of the dynasty's royal status.³⁴ No Lancastrian had personified kingship as forcefully as Henry V; the presence of the eagle during Gloucester's Flanders raid could thus be interpreted as an indication that the duke had acted with the approval, under the supervision, and in the place of his dead brother. The *Vita* had presented an account of Lancastrian destiny that broke off, after the quasi-messianic Henry V had entrusted Gloucester with the protection of his son; the *Humfroidos* showed the duke in action, defending Henry VI's inheritance against the duke of Burgundy, who was portrayed as an instrument of the infernal forces of the pagan underworld.³⁵ As executor of his brother's last will, Gloucester's highest aim was, it has been argued above, to be acknowledged as the most loyal servant of Henry VI. Consequently, Frulovisi's account of Gloucester's triumphal return to England culminated in the description of the duke's gracious reception by the young king:

Huc veniunt proceres populi matresque puellæ
 Ad littus properæ: officiosque auresque locabant:
 Ut noscant cupidi bellum quod gesserat heros.
 Sed [postquam] videre viros qui navibus omnem
 Exponunt prædam que honerant melioribus aptos
 Ducit equos que pedes gradiens. et sarcina sola
 Affidit. ergo studet proprios tum quisque videre
 Agnatos. pariterque lares. gnatosque nepotes.
 Coniugis et faciem. fortunas quisque ferebat.
 Rex [postquam] vidit patrum proceresque britanos,
 Alloquitur dominos blande: Vos patria lætos
 Accipiat. Semperque mihi quum venerat extus
 Grati eritis. Gratumque fer is in omnibus evi

³² WEISS, 'Frulovisi', p. 225; uncritically accepted by GRIFFITHS, p. 237; HARRISS, p. 263 and DOIG, p. 102.

³³ 'Humfroidos', f. 82r, "Hic congradiens ventos et nubila condit/Ast aquilon solus classem deducit ab alto", f. 84r "aquilo lucebat ab alto".

³⁴ STROHM, pp. 12-4.

³⁵ 'Humfroidos', ff. 64v-65v, f. 75r-v.

Temporibus regem. Sed tu fortissimus heros ^{d.cle.}
 Gloria magna domus nostre. Iam corda tenebis
 Nostra quidem nostro grandi devictus amore.
 Si laudes studeamque tui hii persolvere dignas
 Vix valeam. nobis desunt et tempus et aetas
 Sed mea corda tenent firmum semperque tenebunt.
 Adventus rumore tui tumidusque superbus
 Burgundus latuit fugiens. latebrisque tuetur
 Viribus a nostris. famamque secutus iniquam
 [Tempora tui] fuerint actum de viribus esset
 Burgundi. limphas didici quas flandria portat.
 Innumeros imbres pluit hanc donec peragrasti
 Hostilem Patriam. membris [modo] redde quietem.
 Rex manibus dextram remitem patruo oscula donat.
 Qui proprias cædes procerum comittante caterva
 Laetus adit venia que tum quisque recedit.³⁶

This closing passage of the *Humfroidos* can be read as an epitomisation of Gloucester's vision of his future role in the government of a sovereign Henry VI: evidently the duke saw himself as closest confidant of Henry VI, a *primus inter pares* amongst the magnates and a popular hero determined to serve the king as defender of the Lancastrian inheritance.

Frulovisi's texts were thus neither shallow celebrations of the duke's unimpressive military record nor mere by-products of the anti-Burgundian propaganda effort of 1435/6. Instead, the *Vita* and the *Humfroidos* both continued arguments that had their roots in the 1420s and offered an acute commentary on Gloucester's political ideals at the end of Henry VI's minority. The duke's choice of these texts as a medium to convey his political expectations to the young king further testifies to Gloucester's pragmatic approach to literature and the importance he accorded to literary texts in his political action. This approach to literary patronage and political action had already become apparent in Gloucester's commission of the *Serpent of Division* as a commentary on his first confrontation with Beaufort in 1425, and in the duke's directive for the production of the *Fall of Princes* and the *Politics* in the early 1430s in the context of his project to educate Henry VI. How far did the duke manage to realise in politics the ambitions he formulated for Henry VI and himself in the *Vita* and in the *Humfroidos*?

³⁶ Ibid., ff. 85v–86r. Words in square brackets are unclear in the MS and could not be corrected by collation with Weiss's transcript.

Gloucester's political fortune had never been as high as in the immediate aftermath of his raid on Flanders.³⁷ In November 1436 he was granted the Channel Islands; in January 1437 he was accorded the privilege of opening parliament. During the ensuing parliamentary session, he was explicitly complimented on the Calais campaign.³⁸ Yet within a few months, Gloucester's authority receded again, and by the end of 1438 he had all but lost his influence on English politics.

Gloucester had been unable to capitalise on his popularity in 1436/7 because, even before his foray into Flanders, he had made serious errors in the assessment of the political situation in England and Lancastrian France. Since the 1420s, Gloucester had combined his advocacy of a decisive move against France and promotion of trade at Calais with a markedly anti-Burgundian outlook that emphasised the naval control of the channel. During the distribution of Bedford's territorial legacy in France, late in 1435, Gloucester had claimed the lieutenancy of Calais and control of the coastal area east of Normandy. He had thus assumed a position which had, in the 1410s and early 1420s, lain in the hands of John and Thomas Beaufort.³⁹ The Beauforts, in turn, had secured large shares in Normandy and Maine, the heartland of Lancastrian dominion since 1415.⁴⁰ This inversion of the traditional distribution of territorial control in Lancastrian France between the Lancastrians of the full and of the half blood soon proved fatal for Gloucester. While the Beauforts could rely on the infrastructure that had been established under Henry V and Bedford for the administration and defence of their lands in Normandy and Maine, Gloucester's eastern territories were *de facto* under Burgundian control and hence of no immediate value to the duke. Moreover, since England no longer possessed a navy, Gloucester had no means to realise his dream of English supremacy in the channel. Finally, trade through Calais was at an all time low during the late 1430s; and Southampton, the only profitable English port, was firmly under the control of Henry Beaufort.⁴¹ As a result, Gloucester's influence on the formulation of English foreign policy dwindled. His foray into Flanders constituted only a temporary devi-

³⁷ GRIFFITHS, p. 45.

³⁸ VICKERS, pp. 256–7; HARRISS, pp. 278–9.

³⁹ HOLMES, 'Libel', pp. 202–3; HARRISS, p. 61, pp. 68–9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 256–60, p. 265, pp. 280–81.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 259–60, pp. 277–91; HOLMES, 'Libel', pp. 203–4; THOMAS, pp. 220–23.

ation from a course which, under the discreet control of Cardinal Beaufort, continued to focus on the defence of Lancastrian Normandy and the West.⁴² How decisively the initiative in foreign policy had passed into Beaufort's hands is testified by the council's approval, in autumn 1435, of the cardinal's demand for the dispatch of a substantial force to the defence of Normandy and Maine. Beaufort promised to advance the funding for this venture; in return, the defence of Lancastrian France was entrusted to his affines, Edmund Beaufort, Richard, duke of York, and the earls of Salisbury and Suffolk.⁴³ Eighteen months after Gloucester had vainly proposed to appropriate the cardinal's treasure to finance the English war in France, Beaufort had thus successfully appropriated the direction of English foreign policy by offering to cover its running costs.

Gloucester did not fare better in domestic politics. His king-centred policy would have been well-advised, had Henry VI been a strong leader on the model of Frulovisi's Henry V. Yet between 1435 and 1437, the young king exercised his newly acquired authority mainly in order to bestow lavish gifts of crown patronage on his friends at court. Meanwhile, the responsibility for the formulation of policy and the business of government remained in the hands of the council.⁴⁴ In that body, however, Gloucester was isolated. Having focused single-mindedly on the inauguration of Henry VI's personal rule, the duke had failed to create his own constituency in the royal council. Beaufort, on the other hand, continued during this period to consolidate his standing on the council by a series of strategic marriages of his nephews and nieces with leading members of the English aristocracy.⁴⁵

Even against these odds, Gloucester might have been able to save his cause, had he managed to win the trust of Henry VI. Yet, whatever basis of confidence had been established between the king and Gloucester in the aftermath of the coup of 1432, seems to have been systematically destroyed during Bedford's stay in England in 1433/4. After Bedford's death, Gloucester therefore needed to regain Henry VI's faith. Apparently, he hoped that his military exploits in Flanders and the tales of heroic martial feats in the *Vita Henrici Quinti* and

⁴² Ibid., pp. 225–231; GRIFFITHS, pp. 200–202; HARRISS, pp. 259–65.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 261–2.

⁴⁴ GRIFFITHS, pp. 231–2; WATTS, pp. 128–33.

⁴⁵ GRIFFITHS, pp. 231–9; HARRISS, pp. 267–74.

the *Humfroidos* would capture the imagination of the teenage king and thus facilitate the establishment of mutual bonds of understanding. In this, as in all other respects of his policy during this period, Gloucester was thoroughly mistaken; for, however much the duke may have wished that Henry VI would take after his father, the young king showed no interest in military feats, and confronted with the realities of warfare, he displayed a squeamishness quite unbecoming in a medieval ruler.⁴⁶ Therefore it is unlikely that Henry VI would have been attracted to the paragon of a warrior king as presented in Frulovisi's *Vita*, or that he would have relished the *Humfroidos* with its graphic descriptions of the horrors inflicted on Flemish civilians by Gloucester's troops.⁴⁷ Instead, the king may have given preference to the ideal of a pious and pacifist ruler, who relied on his counsellors in all aspects of policy making, as presented in the *Tractatus de Regimine Principum*, which was, about this time, produced for Henry VI by a member of the Beaufort circle.⁴⁸

Whether the puerile king ever read any of the texts that were written for him, and if and in what way they influenced his decisions, is impossible to reconstruct; clearly, however, Gloucester ultimately lost the race for Henry VI's confidence to the Beaufort coterie. The only forum in which the duke managed to win a modicum of support was parliament. Yet the backing of the commons did not provide a durable power base but represented a fleeting alliance of interests, whose influence on government decisions was limited.⁴⁹ For all his aspirations to a position by the side of Henry VI and in the innermost circle of government, Gloucester, in the years after 1436, was thus swiftly losing ground in English politics. This, in turn, was to affect his literary patronage in the late 1430s and early 1440s.

⁴⁶ GRIFFITHS, pp. 235–6, pp. 249–50.

⁴⁷ 'Humfroidos', f. 84r–v.

⁴⁸ For the *Tractatus* see GENET, pp. 40–173; see, however, also the proposal for a later dating, WOLFFE pp. 13–5. The influence of Beaufort and his associates on the education of the king is mentioned by GRIFFITHS, p. 235, pp. 239–40, p. 242.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 237; VICKERS, pp. 256–7.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FIRST DONATION TO OXFORD OF 1439, DA MONTE'S *DE VITIORUM*, HIS TREATMENT OF THE SCIPIO/CAESAR CONTROVERSY AND GLOUCESTER'S FINAL CONFRONTATION WITH BEAUFORT IN 1440

New council ordinances, which were ratified in November 1437, formally recognised the king's overriding authority and incipient powers of grace; concurrently, a privy council of eighteen lay and spiritual lords was appointed to support the king in the exercise of government.¹ The personnel of this body was largely identical with that of the previous minority council; the power structures that had been dominant in the preceding decade remained thus operative during the early years of Henry VI's nominally personal reign.²

As informal president of the council and principal financier of the war, Cardinal Beaufort promoted a strategy of continued military presence in Normandy, Anjou and Gascony, combined with renewed diplomatic efforts to reach an accord with Charles VII and Burgundy.³ Gloucester's Calais-centred policy, which had aimed at the defence of the coastal line and further expansion into Burgundian territory, was scrapped. Frustrated, the duke, in January 1438, resigned from the captaincy of Calais. Henceforth, his influence on the formulation of English foreign policy was minimal.⁴

Gloucester also found himself ignored in domestic politics. Beaufort's ascendance in the council and his close connections with the coterie around Henry VI guaranteed that royal patronage continued to benefit primarily the cardinal and his clients.⁵ Not content with these spoils of his political dominance, Beaufort also encroached on the Lancastrian noble estate. Profiting from the government's disastrous

¹ *P.P.C.*, v, 71, 312–5.

² GRIFFITHS, p. 275; WOLFFE, p. 87; WATTS, pp. 131–40.

³ HARRISS, pp. 292–305.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 278–86, pp. 295–9; THOMAS, pp. 221–37.

⁵ HARRISS, p. 281, pp. 293–4; GRIFFITHS, pp. 278–80; WATTS, p. 136, pp. 173–4.

financial situation, Beaufort, in May 1439, contrived to acquire Chirk and Chirkland in return for a substantive financial contribution towards the defence of Gascony and additional payment of 13,000 marks.⁶

Beaufort's self-confident assertion of his interests intensified Gloucester's apprehensions of the cardinal. In May 1438, Piero da Monte, the papal collector in England since 1435, dispatched a report on the reception of a delegation from the council of Basel at the English court to the Curia. At that point, the collector was on close terms with the duke.⁷ Therefore it seems legitimate to read his report on the reception of the ambassadors from Basel as an accurate reflection of Gloucester's perception of English politics at the close of the 1430s.

According to da Monte, the Basel diplomats had supplicated the council for an interview with Henry VI. Several of the councillors had vetoed such a meeting with reference to the schismatic tendencies of the conciliarists. Yet, these defenders of orthodoxy in the council had found themselves outnumbered by the majority (and thus—by implication—the adherents of Cardinal Beaufort) and the Basel ambassadors had been allowed freely to propagate their schismatic articles before the king in parliament. Dumbfounded with horror, Henry VI and the members of his government had listened in silence until Gloucester and his ally, archbishop Chichele, had broken the spell. Voicing their abhorrence of the conciliarist propositions and defending the authority of Eugenius IV, the duke and the metropolitan had clearly given expression to royal and public opinion; for after they had finished their speeches only the swift action of Beaufort's minions had saved the Basel diplomats from a violent beating at the hands of the commons.⁸

Da Monte's description of the power constellation in English government in the spring of 1438 reiterated the image of Gloucester as disinterested protector of Henry VI, a part to which the duke had aspired since 1422. The collector's emphasis on Gloucester's role as authentic voice of the people reinforced a motif which had first

⁶ Ibid., p. 137n, p. 186n; HARRISS, pp. 288–91.

⁷ Below, Part Two, chapter fourteen, pp. 182–6.

⁸ Vatican City, B.A.V., Vat.lat. 2964 (henceforth cited as DA MONTE, P., 'Epistolary'), ff. 155v–58v, printed in the incomplete edition of da Monte's letters, *Piero da Monte. Ein Gelehrter und päpstlicher Beamter des 15. Jahrhunderts. Seine Briefesammlung*, ed. J. HALLER, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, xix (Rome, 1941), 62–70.

become apparent in the duke's memorandum of 1422, and which had recently resurfaced in the *Humfroidos*. Meanwhile, da Monte's allusions to Beaufort's will to overawe the king, the council, and parliament, echoed Gloucester's warnings of an impending usurpation at the hands of Beaufort, warnings that had been the burden of the duke's argument since 1425.

Gloucester's explicit self-fashioning as defender of the interests of Henry VI and representative of popular concern and his aggressive course against Beaufort may have formed the background to the duke's first donation to the university of Oxford late in 1439 and to his confrontation with Cardinal Beaufort early in 1440. In 1439, 1441 and 1444, Gloucester made generous donations of books to the university of Oxford. Altogether, he presented more than 280 codices to the university.⁹ Among these gifts there was a substantial number of humanist texts. The duke's donations have, therefore, been celebrated as the most important contribution to the transmission of Italian Renaissance humanism to England during the fifteenth century.¹⁰

Exclusive emphasis on the humanist element in Gloucester's donations, however, obscures the fact that the majority of the texts which the duke gave to Oxford were not manuals of the new learning, but theological and scientific textbooks representative of established academic traditions of northern Europe.¹¹ Furthermore, the tendency to discuss Gloucester's gifts to the university *en bloc* conceals the fact that the duke donated different books at different times; it hinders the examination of the evolution of the motives and intentions that informed Gloucester's patronage of Oxford; and it camouflages the immediate connection between cultural pursuits and political action that has been identified as characteristic of his policy.¹²

Therefore it is useful to consider each of the duke's donations to

⁹ VICKERS, pp. 396–407; SCHIRMER, pp. 47–9; WEISS, pp. 65–7; *Duke Humfrey's Library & The Divinity School 1488–1988. An Exhibition at the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 18–49.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 18–21; VICKERS, pp. 402–14; SCHIRMER, pp. 50–51; WEISS, pp. 65–7; FLETCHER, J.M., 'Developments in the Faculty of Arts 1370–1520', in CATTO, J.I./EVANS, R. (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford. Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 315–45, at pp. 342–4.

¹¹ SCHIRMER, p. 48, mentions this distinction, but interpreted the presence of the non-humanist texts as an indication of Gloucester's cultural backwardness.

¹² Compare for instance Rundle's treatment of Gloucester's donations to Oxford, RUNDLE, 'Of Republics and Tyrants', pp. 126–8.

Oxford separately in relation to its political context. The following discussion is exclusively concerned with Gloucester's first donation to the university in November 1439. The analysis departs from the assumption that Gloucester's donation of November 1439 was immediately informed by the duke's desire, on the eve of a renewed attack on Cardinal Beaufort, to establish a strong basis of popular support. Such a reading provides a context for Gloucester's donation of humanist works to Oxford; it throws light on the rationale of his patronage of the university; and establishes a connection between the duke's earlier action in the spheres of culture and politics and his policy in the late 1430s.

Some time in 1431 Gloucester apparently made proposals for curricular reform at Oxford; in the university correspondence, he is habitually addressed as *graciosissimus protector* and *dominus specialissimus*; and Gloucester's physician, Gilbert Kymer, officiated as chancellor of the university from December 1431 to January 1434. These facts are usually cited as evidence for Gloucester's particular interest in Oxford and as testimony to his close relations with the university since the early 1430s.¹³

Yet, prior to 1439, Gloucester's connections with Oxford were not significantly different from those of other prominent politicians of that period. The duke's reform proposals of 1431 are lost; but if it is assumed that they concerned the arts course at Oxford, they would have had their equal in Bedford's patronage of lectures in the *artes liberales* and the three philosophies during the early 1430s.¹⁴ Until 1439, Gloucester's gifts to the university were, if anything, less generous than those of other patrons such as archbishop Chichele.¹⁵ As far the duke's role as protector of the university and Kymer's activity as chancellor are concerned, it has been shown that appointment to these offices tended to be dictated by the university's political

¹³ *Epistolae Academicae Oxoniensi*, ed. H. ANSTEY (2 vols., Oxford, 1898), i, 64–5; WEISS, pp. 65–6; FLETCHER, pp. 323–4; PARKES, M.B., 'The Provision of Books', in CATTO J.I./EVANS, R. (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford*, pp. 407–83, at pp. 473–80.

¹⁴ ANSTEY, i, 53–4, 81–2, 94–5, 106–7; STOREY, R.L., 'University and Government 1430–1500', in CATTO, J.I./EVANS, R. (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford*, pp. 709–46, at p. 715; RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 114–5.

¹⁵ For Gloucester's gifts to Oxford prior to 1439 see ANSTEY, i, 61–2 (15 December 1430, unspecified favours), 114–7 (May 1435, unspecified gifts of books and money). For Chichele's donations for buildings and scholarships, *ibid.*, pp. 66–7, pp. 70–2, pp. 74–5, pp. 83–9.

opportunism.¹⁶ Indeed Kymer's chancellorship and the periods of Gloucester's prominence as protector of the university neatly coincided with the duke's ascendancy in government—at other times, these positions were held by Bedford or Beaufort and their clients.¹⁷ In the light of this evidence, it appears that Gloucester attained prominence as a patron of Oxford only from the mid-1430s onwards. Thus the duke's ascendancy in 1435/6 was paralleled by his return as protector of Oxford.¹⁸ In April 1437, the academic authorities addressed one of their routine petitions for financial aid to him. Concurrently, they sought Gloucester's help in securing several books, which Henry V had bequeathed to the university but which had never reached their destination.¹⁹

This invocation of the late king's testamentary provisions within weeks after Frulovisi's *Vita Henrici Quinti* and the *Humfroidos* had presented the duke as faithful executor of his dead brother's will, must have immediately appealed to Gloucester and may have determined his decision to continue and extend his brother's patronage of the university. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the emphasis on the promotion of the faculties of theology and medicine in Gloucester's first donation to the university in November 1439 echoed the focus on the support of advanced learning in Henry V's testamentary provisions for Oxford.²⁰ Possibly, Gloucester perceived his patronage of the university as an opportunity to project his self-image as protector of his dead brother's will beyond the confines of the

¹⁶ STOREY, pp. 712–9.

¹⁷ Gloucester appears in a prominent position in the university's correspondence between 1427 and 1429 (i.e. during his second protectorate) and between December 1430 and June 1433, (i.e. during his spell as *custos Anglie* during Henry VI's coronation expedition and in the aftermath of the 1432 coup). ANSTEY, i, 35–7, 61–2, 76–9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, i, 128–30, 133–6, 139–40.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, i, 152–3.

²⁰ For the inventory of this donation see SAMMUT, pp. 61–9. It comprised forty theological works (nos. 1–39, no. 41), twelve philosophical treatises (no. 40, nos. 42–45, nos. 47–53), among them copies of Bruni's translations of the *Ethics* and the *Politics* (nos. 49–50), fifty-four medical and scientific texts (nos. 54–111) and two dictionaries (nos. 46, 124). Henry V had bequeathed his books to the faculties of theology and law, STRONG/STRONG, p. 94; McFARLANE, *Lancastrian Kings*, pp. 233–8. The shift of emphasis from law to medicine in Gloucester's donation of November 1439, may have been either a mark of the duke's personal tastes, or a hint of the pivotal role which Gilbert Kymer appears to have played in the direction of Gloucester's patronage, compare GETZ, F.M., 'The Faculty of Medicine before 1500', in CATTO, J.I./EVANS, R. (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford*, pp. 373–405, at p. 403.

court, and publicise it to a wider audience. Who was this audience, and what determined the duke's decision to reach out for it in November 1439? A consideration of the political events of that period may provide the answer to that question.

During the summer of 1439, the council under Beaufort's lead had proposed the release of the duke of Orléans, who had been in English captivity since Agincourt, as a concession to Charles VII in the negotiations over the future of Lancastrian France.²¹ Gloucester opposed this plan, which he considered a breach of Henry V's strict testamentary injunctions against the release of high ranking French captives.²² Profiting from Beaufort's temporary absence from the realm, Gloucester in September 1439 summoned parliament to convene at Oxford at the beginning of November, and almost certainly, the duke intended to use this parliament for another attack on the cardinal.²³

Such an attack would have stood better chances of success if Gloucester could have relied on strong popular support. In the fifteenth century, the majority of the students at Oxford came from the gentry and the burgher elite; they were thus recruited from the same social strata that filled the ranks of the commons in parliament.²⁴ Therefore it seems highly likely that Gloucester timed his first donation to Oxford to coincide with the opening of parliament in that town, in the hope that such a gift to the university, which immediately benefited the sons and kinsmen of the members of parliament, would win him a strong basis of popular support in the ensuing parliamentary session.²⁵ This hypothesis is supported by a letter the academic authorities addressed to the commons shortly after Gloucester's donation:

²¹ STRONG/STRONG, p. 92.

²² RYMER, x, 864-7; VICKERS, pp. 264-6; GRIFFITHS, pp. 443-50; THOMAS, pp. 240-4; HARRISS, p. 315.

²³ Ibid., pp. 306-7; VICKERS, p. 260.

²⁴ LYTLE, G.F., 'The Social Origins of Oxford Students in the Late Middle Ages: New College, c. 1380-1510', in IJSEWIJN, J./PAQUET, J. (eds.), *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages* (Louvain, 1978), pp. 426-55; EVANS, T.A.R., 'The Number, Origins and Careers of Scholars', CATTO, J.I./EVANS, R. (eds.) *History of the University of Oxford*, pp. 485-538, at pp. 512-6.

²⁵ Implied by HARRISS, pp. 306-7. Compare Rundle's passing remark that Gloucester's patronage of Oxford invested the duke with the air of being concerned with the *bonum commune*, RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 155-6.

Worthy syres, for as moch as meny of yowr owne issu and also Kynnesmen hath be, beth now, and shall be in tyme commyng tenderly and bisely noryshed and avaunced with the rype frute of Konnyng in our moder the Universite of Oxon; in to the glory and the worship of Godd in speciall, and to the mayntenaunce of Crysten fayth, causyng of wyse men in the reme, and to yow grete joy, confort and eternall mede, that causeth supporteth and forthefyth such studiers; Therefore we conceyvyth that your naturesses and benevolence shold enjoy with us for the fortheraunce of the sayde Universite; and because our rythe special lorde and myghty prince, the Duke of Gloucestre, hathe of late endoed and so magnified our sayde Universite with a thousand pound worth and more of preciose bokes, to the lovyng of Godd, encrece of clergy and konnyng men; to the good governaunce and prosperite of the Reme of Englund without end, before all other remes and contres of the world: Wherffore we beseche your sage discrecions to consider the gloriose yiftes of the graciose prince to our sayde Universite, for the comyn profyte and worship of the reme, to thank hym hertly.²⁶

Originally possibly inspired by his wish to publicise his self-image as faithful executor of Henry V's will, Gloucester's donation to Oxford in 1439 may thus have become a vehicle for the duke to win popular backing in his final reckoning with Cardinal Beaufort.

This politicisation does not invalidate Gloucester's generosity towards the university; on the contrary, the duke's apparent expectation that his donation would have immediate effects on the polity, can be read an indication of the importance he attributed to learning and culture in the sphere of politics. Gloucester's first donation to Oxford of November 1439 may thus be interpreted as a concentration of elements that had informed his policy in the preceding decades: his desire to protect the legacy of Henry V, his enmity of Henry Beaufort, and his perception of the connections between political action and cultural patronage.

If Gloucester's summons of parliament to Oxford, and his contemporaneous donation to the university, had been intended to prepare the ground for an attack on Beaufort during the ensuing parliamentary session, this intended effect was neutralised by the fact that, obviously aware of his opponents designs, Beaufort, after his return to England early in October 1439, managed to obtain a change of the parliamentary venue for to Westminster.²⁷ Apparently

²⁶ ANSTEY, i, 184.

²⁷ HARRISS, pp. 306-7.

undaunted, Gloucester stood by his promises to the university and persevered in his aggressive course against Beaufort. He first voiced his grievances in the council meetings that accompanied the parliamentary session of November/December 1439 and was then requested to put his protest in writing.²⁸

The following discussion of Gloucester's final attack on Beaufort in winter 1439/40 contends that the duke drew the inspiration for the pose as upright defender of the constitution, which he adopted in a diatribe against the cardinal of February 1440, from an adaptation of the Scipio/Caesar controversy between Poggio Bracciolini and Guarino da Verona, that the papal collector in England, Piero da Monte, dedicated to Gloucester in January 1440.

In order to understand the principles that guided da Monte's reworking of the Scipio/Caesar controversy, it is helpful to examine the collector's adaptation of another text by Poggio. David Rundle has identified da Monte's *De Vitiorum et Virtutum Differentia inter se*, a humanistic dialogue on the harmful effects of avarice on civic society, which the collector composed for Gloucester in 1438, as a "near complete reproduction" of Poggio's *De Avaritia*.²⁹ Dismissing *De Vitiorum* as outright plagiarism, Rundle asserted that da Monte had given his replica of Poggio's text to Gloucester in order to enhance his standing with the duke, who was too much of a vainglorious ignoramus to notice the papal official's brazen act of literary piracy.³⁰ *Pace* Rundle, the present examination proposes that da Monte's choice of *De Avaritia* as a blueprint for *De Vitiorum*, and his decision to present Gloucester not with Poggio's original text but with an adapted version under his own name, were informed by the collector's desire to make ideas, that had evolved in the humanist debate in Italy, available to Gloucester in his struggle with Beaufort.

De Avaritia circulated within the Italian humanist community soon after Poggio had completed it in 1429.³¹ Da Monte may, therefore, have known the text and owned a copy of it even before he left

²⁸ Ibid., p. 308n.

²⁹ RUNDLE, D., 'Virtue and Weiss', at p. 195 and, more extensively in id., 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 143–6, pp. 167–72, pp. 188–93. A copy of *De Vitiorum* is preserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct.F.5.26, ff. 3r–84v, compare SAMMUT, pp. 127–8.

³⁰ RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 145–8.

³¹ HARTH, H., 'Niccolò Niccoli als literarischer Zensor', *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser., vii (1967), 29–53.

Italy for London in 1435. By 1438, the collector was Gloucester's confidant; he would have been aware of the duke's reliance on literary models for the formulation of his policy, and he may have gauged that, at a time when Cardinal Beaufort was unscrupulously appropriating ever larger portions of the Lancastrian inheritance, Poggio's savage denunciation of avarice would have rich resonance with Gloucester. This may have inspired da Monte to introduce the duke to *De Avaritia*, or, rather, to a rendering of *De Avaritia*, which was more likely to appeal to Gloucester than the versions of that text that were available in England at that point.

If *De Avaritia* was at all attainable in England during the late 1430s, it was in the first recension of the text.³² This first draft, which Poggio had unofficially published a few months before the second, authoritative, version of his text, contained many references to specifically Italian issues and it was somewhat weighed down with learned allusions, which non-academic, cisalpine readers may have found irrelevant and confusing. Most of these specific references and superfluous quotations had been removed from the second, definitive, recension, which would thus have been more appealing to an audience that was not immediately familiar with the intellectual debate in Italy.³³ This may have determined da Monte's decision to introduce Gloucester to this streamlined version of *De Avaritia*, rather than to its less polished prototype.³⁴

Yet, whatever valuable lessons the second recension of *De Avaritia* may have held for Gloucester in his struggle with Beaufort, the duke may still have balked at the fact that Poggio, the author of this tract, was a client of the cardinal.³⁵ Possibly, this would not have stopped Gloucester from reading a text with such a promising title; still he might have preferred to receive his intellectual ammunition from da Monte, a man he trusted, and from whose pen a condemnation of avarice could be savoured as a sly comment on Beaufort's politics

³² Ibid., p. 40; RUNDLE, 'Virtue and Weiss', p. 196n, pp. 199–200.

³³ The first recension of *De Avaritia* is printed in BRACCIOLINI, P., *Opera Omnia*, ed. R. FUBINI (3 vols., Turin, 1964), from now on cited as POGGIO, *Opera* i, 1–31. For the second recension see BRACCIOLINI, P., *Dialogus contra avaritiam (De Avaritia)*, transcribed and translated by G. GERMANO (Livorno, 1994). For the differences between the two versions see HARTH, 'Niccolò Niccoli', pp. 43–4.

³⁴ RUNDLE, 'Virtue and Weiss', p. 195n established that *De Vitiorum* was based on the second recension, but failed to draw any conclusions from his finding.

³⁵ Poggio's links with Beaufort are discussed below, Part Three, chapter nineteen.

in 1437/8. Da Monte's decision to present Poggio's ideas under his own name may thus have been less an act of intellectual theft than a shrewd diplomatic trick designed to render *De Avaritia* even more interesting and enjoyable for Gloucester.

This specific form of 'translation' raises important questions about the nature of humanist texts that were most suited to consumption by non-Italian readers and draws attention to the processes that were necessary to make such texts attractive for a non-humanist audience.³⁶ The possibility that da Monte consciously selected the second recension of *De Avaritia* for Gloucester, and that the collector may have deliberately adapted the text to the duke's requirements, would presuppose considerable sensitivity to Gloucester's expectations and reading habits and would thus contradict Rundle's assertion that da Monte ruthlessly exploited the duke's alleged rusticity.

The same principles of selection and adaptation may have guided da Monte's decision, in January 1440, to contribute to the Scipio/Caesar controversy and to make that contribution available to Gloucester. The Scipio/Caesar controversy between Poggio Bracciolini and Guarino da Verona had erupted in Italy in 1435 in the context of the competition between Ferrara and Florence as future locations for the Council of Union. Speaking for his master, the duke of Ferrara, Guarino had championed Caesar as the model prince and founder of the ideal constitution. As the representative of republican Florence, Poggio had written a counter-manifesto, which condemned Caesar as a tyrant who had wilfully sabotaged the Roman constitution to further his personal ambition. Poggio had then celebrated the civic virtue of Scipio Africanus and Cato the Younger and their willingness to devote their lives to the defence of the Roman republic.³⁷

Some time during the second half of 1439, Poggio had sent copies of Guarino's and his own contributions to the debate to da Monte in London.³⁸ Apparently, the collector had instantly perceived the

³⁶ For a discussion of the reception of humanist texts in fifteenth century England see RUNDLE, 'Virtue and Weiss', pp. 198–203 and id. 'Of Republics and Tyrants', *passim*.

³⁷ TATEO, F., 'Ferrara e Firenze: La Disputa Umanistica nelle Città del Concilio', in VITI, P. (ed.), *Firenze e il Concilio del 1439*, Biblioteca Storica Toscana, xxix (2 vols., Florence, 1994), ii, 493–507, at pp. 503–4; RUBINSTEIN, N., 'Political Theories in the Renaissance', in CHASTEL, A. (ed.), *The Renaissance* (London, 1982), pp. 153–200, at pp. 175–7; OPPEL, J., 'Peace versus Liberty in the Quattrocento', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, iv (1974), pp. 221–65.

³⁸ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 197r–v.

potential pertinence of the Scipio/Caesar controversy to Gloucester's vision of his own role in English politics in 1439/40; for he had immediately passed on Poggio's and Guarino's original manifestos to the duke. Yet da Monte had soon found that, sidetracked by the belligerent rhetoric of the controversy, Gloucester failed to perceive the latent relevance of these texts for his own confrontation with Beaufort.³⁹ This may have inspired da Monte, in December 1439, to draft a summary of the controversy which put in relief the main issues of the debate in a manner that potentially made them more immediately accessible to Gloucester.⁴⁰

As in his work on *De Avaritia*, the collector first excised all references to the Italian context of the original controversy and rephrased the central arguments of the dispute in a studied non-polemical tone. Adopting Poggio's position, da Monte portrayed Caesar as an ambitious usurper, who by subtle manipulation of the constitution and naked force, had arrogated the rule of the state only to lead the commonwealth into civil war. Still in accordance with Poggio, da Monte then extolled Scipio Africanus as an exemplar of patriotic virtue, who had selflessly dedicated himself to the defence of his *patria* against foreign aggression.⁴¹ Even higher tribute da Monte paid to the integrity of Cato, whose courage to speak up against Caesar's

³⁹ Ibid., f. 208v, "Dedi ego hanc disputationem nostram illustrissimo principi Humfredo duci Gloucestriae, qui cum sit virtutis hospes, litterarum splendor, et nobilitatis ornamentum, inter veteres illos heroas, quos velut deos venerabatur antiquitas, si hoc nostra religio pateretur, esset non immerito collocandus. Legit is libellum magna quadam aviditate—nam a praeclaris scriptoribus nil nisi elegans artificiosum atque elaboratum dictari potuisse facile sibi persuadebat—. Paucis autem post diebus, cum ad eum rediissem, rogatus a me quale esset ipsius de ea disputatione iudicium, responsum paucis ita reddidit heros: "Ego—inquit—Poggii et Guarini eloquentiam admiror et laudo, dignosque eos censeo gloria immortalis. Nam haec suavissima humanitatis studia, quae pene extincta videbantur, eorum ingenio labore et industria veterem splendorem decoremque recuperarunt, magnaque nostrae aetatis hominibus, horum exemplo data spes est, ad priscam illam latinae linguae elegantiam proprius accedendi. Caeterum Guarinum magna reprehensione dignum iudico, quod in nulla impugnationis suae parte iniurias contumelias et maledicta in Poggium praetermisit. Opinabar enim hisce humanitatis studiis, quae, ut inquit, C[icero], adulescentiam agunt, senectutem oblectant, quibus Gua[rinus] per omnem aetatem operam dedit, eum gravitatem quandam morum et in omni sermone honestatem ac modestiam sibi ipsi usurpasse, quod secus accidisse admiror permaxime. Licebat enim ei Caesaris causam suscipere, illam defendere, illius praestantiam ostendere; at Poggio detrudere ac maledicere nullo modo, qui pro animi sui sententia Caesari praeferre visus est Scipionem."

⁴⁰ Ibid., ff. 207r–18r. Printed in POGGIO, *Opera*, iv, 617–39.

⁴¹ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 210r–v (POGGIO, *Opera*, p. 624).

seizure of power had been a patriotic act comparable to Scipio's grandest military feats and had justly earned him the love and respect of the people.⁴²

In 1425, Lydgate's description in the *Serpent of Division* of the struggle of valiant Caesar with the unscrupulous usurper Pompey could have been read as an allegory of Gloucester's first confrontation with Beaufort in the aftermath of his Hainault campaign. Thirteen years later, da Monte's summary of Poggio's position in the Scipio/Caesar controversy may have offered the duke a new role model in the figure of Cato. Cato's opposition to Caesar in the name of the people and the republican constitution provided a parallel to Gloucester's ambition to style himself as popular leader and defender of Henry VI's legitimate rule against what he perceived as Beaufort's unbri-dled greed for power. Da Monte's reworking of the Scipio/Caesar controversy can thus be seen as another instance of the diplomat's ability to adapt an originally Italian work to the context of English politics. As in the case of *De Avaritia/De Vitiorum*, the very fact that the collector made the effort to undertake this 'translation', suggests that he trusted Gloucester would read such a text with interest.

Da Monte finished his work on the Scipio/Caesar controversy some time before 31 January 1440.⁴³ Gloucester's recently discovered dedication copy of the text bears signs of having been executed in great haste.⁴⁴ Possibly the duke therefore had a copy of da Monte's

⁴² Ibid., f. 216r-v (Poggio, *Opera*, pp. 635-7), in particular "Amor vero eius in patriam quibus verbis potest explicari? Omnium siquidem bonorum, omnium oppressorum defensor fuit, gratuitam unicuique operam suam impendens; neminem sibi blanditiis conciliavit; in senatu libere dixit; utilitatem publicam cunctis rebus anteposuit; omnes factiones conspirationesque, praesertim potentum, velut rei publicae perniciosas semper damnavit. Quod autem maximum amoris eius in patriam indicium est, Caesaris audaciae et furoris se totis viribus obicem posuit, idque persaepe cum magno vitae suae discrimine. Praevidebat enim vir prudentissimus ignem illum nisi cum parvus esset extinguendus, ingens susciturus incendium. Cuius consilio ac voluntati si paritum fuisset, nunquam profecto res p[ublica] in tales calamitates incidisset. Quo in loco facile discerni potest quanto maior apud romanos fuerit eius quam Caesaris auctoritas, cum adversus eum, quem sibi infestissimum experiebatur suisque ausibus tanto studio resistentem, nihil unquam acerbioris vindictae exercere ausus fuerit, quoniam eum ab omni senatu et universo populo velut intrepidum libertatis publicae defensorem maxima veneratione coli atque observari cernebat."

⁴³ In the Vatican copy, the tract is dated "pridie kalendas februarii" (i.e. 31 January), *ibid.*, f. 218r (Poggio, *Opera*, p. 639).

⁴⁴ For Gloucester's dedication copy see Cambridge University Library, MS.Gg.i.34 (I), described by RUNDLE, D., 'Two Unnoticed Manuscripts'. The manuscript lacks captions for the individual articles and the illuminations had not completely dried

tract by the time he completed his indictment of Beaufort in mid-February. Even if Gloucester did not receive the dedication copy before his attack on the cardinal, he may have had a rough copy of da Monte's text. Besides the collector may have discussed the contents of his work with Gloucester as he was writing. Therefore it seems highly likely that the duke was familiar with the central arguments of da Monte's text, when he drafted his list of twenty-one charges against Beaufort. This may explain the striking parallels between da Monte's tract of January 1440 and the *Declaracone* against Beaufort, which Gloucester published in parliament less than a month later.

In his indictment of the cardinal, Gloucester implicitly affirmed the orthodox ideal of divinely sanctioned, hereditary, kingship centred on a monarch, who was in full enjoyment of his noble estate and in control of his fiscal prerogative.⁴⁵ The *Declaracone* painted the portrait of a sovereign, who devised policy by the exercise of will and grace after consultation with representatives of the three estates and who was able to mobilise the populace in the fight for the safeguard of his patrimony.⁴⁶ As a celebration of ideal government, Gloucester's vision of strong kingship, which Henry VI should have been able to exercise, echoed Cato's affirmation of the republican constitution of Rome in da Monte's treatment of the Scipio/Caesar controversy—and in the same way in which Cato, in his speech before the senate, had censured Caesar's subversion of the republican constitution,

before binding, *ibid.*, p. 213, p. 218. Compare also the detailed description of the manuscript in *id.*, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 324–7. These flaws may indicate that the copy was executed under extreme pressure for time—possibly during the three weeks that passed between the completion of the text and its dispatch to Rome on 22 February 1440, for which see DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', ff. 197r–v (POGGIO, *Opera*, p. 607).

⁴⁵ The text of Gloucester's *Declaracone . . . ayeinst thenenlargissement and deliuerance of Charles, duc of Orliance* (cited below as *Declaracone*) is printed in *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France during the Reign of Henry VI*, ed. J. STEVENSON (2 vols. in 3, Rolls ser., London, 1861–4), ii, 440–51. The legitimacy of Lancastrian rule is emphasised by presenting the Lancastrians as descendants of a long line of English kings, who had laid claims to the French crown, e.g. *ibid.* p. 446. The divine favour enjoyed by the Lancastrians is highlighted by the emphatic invocation of god's grace with every mention of individual members of the dynasty, e.g. "my lord, your fadre [Henry V] (whom God assoyle)", *ibid.*, p. 441, p. 444, p. 445, p. 447, p. 448. For the noble estate and royal patronage of the Lancastrians, *ibid.*, pp. 444–6, p. 448. For the king's fiscal prerogative, pp. 442–4, pp. 448–50.

⁴⁶ On the role of consultation with the three estates, *ibid.*, pp. 442–3, pp. 449–50; for the role of the king in the formulation and execution of foreign policy, *ibid.*, pp. 444–8.

Gloucester, in his *Declaracone* before parliament, proceeded to denounce the “disordinate rieule” of Cardinal Beaufort.⁴⁷

The *Declaracone* carefully avoided any reference to the bonds of kinship between the Lancastrians and the Beauforts; instead the explicit mention of Beaufort’s nephew, Thomas Swynford, was clearly intended to recall the illegitimate origins of the Lancastrians of the half blood.⁴⁸ By contrast with the divinely approved kingship of the Lancastrians, Beaufort had “taken upon him” the state of cardinal “out of the pride and ambicion that was in his persone”.⁴⁹ Lacking an inheritance, the cardinal had contrived to keep the bishopric of Winchester *in commendam*.⁵⁰ As a self-made prince of the Church, the illegitimate, penniless Beaufort had thus attained a status within the realm that put him on a par with the rightful Lancastrian king.⁵¹ Not content with this inordinate power in the ecclesiastical sphere, the cardinal had actively extended his influence into the secular domain. As a feoffee of the duchy of Lancaster, Beaufort had, during the minority of Henry VI, infringed on the king’s noble estate, by unlawfully investing his niece, Elizabeth Beauchamp, with valuable duchy lands.⁵² After the king’s coronation, the cardinal had assumed control of the distribution of patronage in Normandy.⁵³ Since the beginning of the king’s personal rule, Beaufort had systematically abused the inexperience and trust of Henry VI to avail himself of the Lancastrian estate in England. This had culminated in the under-hand sale of Chirk and Chirkland in 1439.⁵⁴

Moreover, the cardinal had arrogated the king’s prerogative in policy making. During the minority, he had presumed the estate royal by calling the council to his own palace and by taking important political decisions without consultation with the great council or parliament.⁵⁵ After the coronation, the cardinal had, in his function as “privy counsaillier”, assumed the “gouvernance” of the king. His

⁴⁷ RUNDLE, ‘Republics and Tyrants’, pp. 183–6, pointed out that by contrast to Poggio’s original tract, da Monte’s contribution was less of a defence of republican values than a conventional tirade against tyranny.

⁴⁸ ‘Declaracone’, p. 444.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 441.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 442, p. 450.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 441–2, p. 449.

⁵² Ibid., p. 444.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 450.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 448.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 444, pp. 446–9, pp. 450–51.

control of access to Henry VI had cut off the free flow of information between the sovereign and his subjects that was one of the traditional mainstays of good kingship.⁵⁶ Since the beginning of Henry VI's personal rule, Beaufort had advocated a course in French diplomacy, which would, Gloucester prophesied, lead the Lancastrian dominion in France to be "brent up, destroyed, loste and utterly tourned from [Henry's] obeisance".⁵⁷

Beaufort's greed for power was further manifest in his encroachment on the inalienable fisc of the crown. The cardinal's exemption from taxation on Winchester had, according to Gloucester, created a precedent for other bishops, whose decreasing willingness to contribute to state expenditure meant that the main burden of taxation had devolved on the lay community.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, Beaufort had employed his financial might to gain, by means of strategically timed loans, control over the customs of Southampton and other ports. His stranglehold on the crown's only steady source of income was inevitably driving the Exchequer into ever greater dependence on Beaufort.⁵⁹ As a further powerful illustration of the cardinal's intent on an unfriendly takeover, Gloucester cited Beaufort's appropriation of the symbolic capital of the crown, exemplified in the cardinal's retention of the crown jewels as security for his loans.⁶⁰

Yet, in Gloucester's eyes, Beaufort was not only dangerous as a potential usurper of the throne; operating outside the established social order, the cardinal was undermining the very foundations of the commonwealth. Under Henry V, Beaufort had proved his unwillingness to subordinate himself to the established hierarchy when he had attempted to obtain the cardinalate without royal licence.⁶¹ During the minority and early reign of Henry VI, Beaufort had betrayed his obligations as the king's liegeman and councillor by taking advantage of Henry VI's "tendre age", to benefit himself and his family.⁶² Beaufort had violated the consultative right of his peers, the lords spiritual and temporal, by denying them free access to the king.⁶³

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 442–3, pp. 450–51.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 449–50.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 441.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 448.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 442–3, pp. 447–8.

Finally, the cardinal had failed to observe the obligations of a lord to his liegemen when he implemented policies that burdened the commonwealth with taxes and abandoned the English colonists in France to the mercy of the French.⁶⁴

Gloucester's denunciation of Beaufort as principal enemy of the crown bears strong resemblance to da Monte's portrait of Caesar as an unscrupulous usurper, who had wilfully destroyed Roman civic liberties to promote his self-interest. Meanwhile, the role of first servant of the king and self-appointed spokesman of the people, which Gloucester assumed in the *Declaracone*, showed remarkable similarities with da Monte's representation of Cato.

Throughout the text, Gloucester expressed his deference to the king and implicitly emphasised the pointed contrast between Beaufort's presumptuous lack of "worship" and his own loyal subordination by addressing Henry VI as his "right doubted lord".⁶⁵ The duke further exemplified his fealty by contrasting Beaufort's and Kemp's alleged treasonable collusion with the enemy with his own willingness to die in defence of Henry's claim to the French crown.⁶⁶ With reference to his noble peers, Gloucester emphasised his responsibility, as a lord of the blood, to advocate the concerns of the "sadde advised trieu men of this royaume", whom Beaufort had estranged from the king.⁶⁷ Concurrently, the *Declaracone* stressed Gloucester's role as authentic voice of the people, particularly when the duke demanded the removal of Beaufort and Kemp from Henry VI's privy council "to that entent that men may be at thair fredam to sey what hem thenketh of trouthe; for thogh I [Gloucester] dar speke of my trouthe, the poure ne dar not so".⁶⁸

Accusations against evil councillors and the invocation of popular interest were a common feature of aristocratic criticism of prominent politicians, and similarities with aspects of Gloucester's earlier attacks on Beaufort and the vision of politics proposed in the *Vita Henrici Quinti* and the *Humfroidos* demonstrate that the *Declaracone* was

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 443, pp. 445–7, pp. 449–50.

⁶⁵ Ibid., passim.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 446. Seen from this angle, Gloucester's advocacy of an intransigent policy towards France, was thus not so much an expression of the duke's genuine bellicosity as an indication of his discontent with the distribution of power in domestic politics, compare WATTS, p. 181, pp. 188–9.

⁶⁷ STEVENSON, ii, 442–3, 447–8.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 451.

a continuation of arguments the duke had pursued long before he had ever heard of the Scipio/Caesar controversy. Yet the way these arguments were presented in the *Declaracone*, and the pose which Gloucester adopted in his speech, are strongly reminiscent of da Monte's Scipio/Caesar-tract. This suggests that, even though he did not explicitly refer to the collector's work in the *Declaracone*, Gloucester may have found in da Monte's treatment of the Scipio/Caesar debate a model for the definition of his own stance in his final confrontation with Beaufort. The duke's proposed debt to da Monte for the formulation of his *Declaracone* can be read as a further testimony to the importance Gloucester accorded to historical example culled from ancient literature as model for his own political action. This emphasis on the consultation of history in the conception of policy had already been evident in the design of the curriculum for Henry VI of 1428 and, even more pointedly, in Gloucester's commission of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*. Like his first donation to Oxford, Gloucester's final attack on Cardinal Beaufort can thus be interpreted as an extreme focalisation of the three leitmotifs of Gloucester's action that had evolved in the preceding decades: his self-image as protector of the Lancastrian legacy and the interests of Henry VI, his enmity of Henry Beaufort, and his acute awareness of the dynamic interrelation between culture and politics. In the ensuing decade, which witnessed the emergence of a radically new power constellation in English politics, these interlocking themes in Gloucester's policy became dissociated and gradually ceased to influence his action. This process of erosion is the subject of the following three chapters, which are concerned with Gloucester's decline into political ignominy.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION. SUFFOLK'S RISE DURING THE LATE 1430S AND THE COBHAM TRIAL OF 1441

Gloucester's public reckoning with the cardinal before parliament in February 1440 was the swan song of a constellation in English politics which had prevailed more or less unchanged between 1422 and 1440. Gloucester's attack precipitated Beaufort's retirement from politics; yet it did not inaugurate the personal rule of Henry VI but merely opened the way to power for a new oligarchic clique that was situated in the court and managed by William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk. In the summer of 1441, Suffolk's nascent regime charged Gloucester's second wife, Eleanor Cobham, with treason. The following account contends that the show trial of his wife and her ensuing imprisonment under the supervision of members of Suffolk's household coterie did not, as has hitherto been assumed, mark the end of Gloucester's public career but initiated a new phase of his life in politics. This re-reading of the events of 1441 aims to provide the background for a reassessment of Gloucester's political action and cultural patronage during the final years of his life, when the direction of English government lay largely in the hands of Suffolk and his associates.

Gloucester's *Declaracone* so powerfully subverted Beaufort's authority that the cardinal saw himself forced to agree to the winding up of the enfeoffment of the duchy of Lancaster, which had previously been firmly under his control. Moreover, Beaufort had to accept the appointment of Richard, duke of York, instead of one of his own nephews as commander of the English forces in France.¹ Still, Gloucester failed to attain his larger aim of bringing an impeachment against Beaufort; once the *Declaracone* had done its limited damage, it was hushed up and not even included in the official records of the 1440 parliament.² Negotiations concerning the liberation of Orléans went further ahead; in summer 1440, another public protest

¹ GRIFFITHS, p. 459; WOLFFE, p. 153; HARRISS, pp. 312–3.

² Ibid., p. 309; WATTS, p. 186.

by Gloucester met with a strong reprimand from Henry VI, who claimed full responsibility for the project.³ The duke could do no more to demonstrate his opposition than to walk out of the solemn ceremony in Westminster Abbey which finalised Orléans's release in October 1440.⁴

Gloucester found himself cold-shouldered, because, having for more than fifteen years fixed on Beaufort as the cardinal enemy of Lancastrian interests, he had disregarded the emergence of William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, as a new player on the scene. Established as steward of Henry VI's household after Bedford's return to England in July 1433, Suffolk had, in the following years, doggedly insinuated himself at the centre of power.⁵ In 1437, he had been appointed to Henry VI's council; in the following five years, Suffolk had fostered close contacts with Beaufort.⁶ He had established himself as the council's contact with the court, where he increasingly assumed the role of principal confidant to Henry VI. By late 1439, Suffolk had felt sufficiently secure in his role of unique liaison between the king and his government to initiate the dismantling of the power structures that had evolved since 1422 and the shifting of the centre of policy-making from the council to the court.⁷ Suffolk had thus gradually attained the position which Gloucester had aimed to create for himself by his coup of February 1432 and to which the duke had continued to aspire throughout the 1430s.⁸

Gloucester's final attack on Beaufort had played into Suffolk's hands, because it had undermined the cardinal's standing in English politics.⁹ Possibly the earl had even consciously instrumentalised Gloucester's animosity against Beaufort to neutralise the cardinal. Once, however, Gloucester had fulfilled that function, he inevitably became a liability in Suffolk's new order; for, as heir apparent, the duke could neither be excluded from the council nor from the inner circle about the king and there was no guarantee that in the future

³ RYMER, v.i, 76-7; STEVENSON, ii, 451-63; VICKERS, pp. 264-5, GRIFFITHS, pp. 451-2; WOLFFE, p. 126; HARRISS, pp. 315-7; WATTS, pp. 187-8.

⁴ VICKERS, pp. 267-8.

⁵ The following account of Suffolk's rise is indebted to the reconstruction by WATTS, pp. 151-99. See also GRIFFITHS, pp. 278-86; WOLFFE, pp. 87-105, pp. 135-45.

⁶ WATTS, pp. 161-2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-45.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 162, pp. 184-6; HARRISS, pp. 308-9.

the duke would not direct his harangues against evil councillors which had previously been directed against Beaufort, against Suffolk and his satellites.¹⁰ Gloucester thus represented a potential threat to the earl's authority. Yet, the duke also stood for qualities which Suffolk's regime may have wished to appropriate. Gloucester was the sole surviving member of the Lancastrian main line beside the king and the *Declaracion* had reasserted the duke's image as faithful executor of Henry V's will and loyal servant of Henry VI, which he had tried to impress on the English polity since 1422. If the duke could be induced to collaborate with the new men about the king, this would lend an air of legitimacy and sense of continuity to Suffolk's camarilla, which it otherwise lacked. That Gloucester would voluntarily cooperate with the court oligarchy was, however, unlikely; it would, therefore, have been expedient for Suffolk's men, to deal a strategic blow to the duke's political independence, a blow that would not terminate his career outright, but that would neutralise his potential as opposition leader and enable the court clique to parade Gloucester as a figurehead of its regime. It is here proposed that to achieve this objective, Suffolk's government, in the summer of 1441, opened its proceedings against the duke's wife, Eleanor Cobham.¹¹

Eleanor Cobham, an erstwhile attendant of Gloucester's first wife, Jacqueline of Hainault, had accompanied the duke on his return from the continent in 1425. Three years later, after Gloucester's marriage to Jacqueline had been declared invalid, she had married the duke. The duchess cultivated a fashionable interest in magic and astrology, she possessed a collection of magical treatises and renowned practitioners of necromancy and astrology were members of her household.¹² This made it easy for Gloucester's enemies to fabricate a charge against her. Late in June 1441, several members of Eleanor's *familia*, including her personal clerk, Roger Bolingbroke, were arrested and accused of having conspired to bring about the king's death through black art.¹³ Three weeks later, proceedings were opened

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 229–30.

¹¹ This hypothesis develops an idea by THOMAS, pp. 258–67, who proposed that the Cobham affair was a preventive strike by Suffolk to gain control over Gloucester.

¹² GRIFFITHS, R.A., 'The Trial of Eleanor Cobham: An Episode in the Fall of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester' in id. (ed.), *King and Country*, pp. 233–52, at pp. 236–7. VICKERS, pp. 275–7. See also CAREY, H.M., *Courting Disaster: Astrology at the English Court and University in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1992), pp. 139–53.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 140–49. The following sketch of Eleanor's apprehension and trial is based on VICKERS, pp. 269–80 and GRIFFITHS, 'Eleanor Cobham', pp. 240–47.

against Eleanor, who had meanwhile fled into sanctuary at Westminster Abbey. Under cross-examination from leading ecclesiastic lords, among them Beaufort, Kemp, and Chichele, the duchess, on 25 July, admitted to several of the charges that were brought against her, maintaining, however, her innocence of treason. The next day, she was handed over to the secular arm. The investigation was entrusted to high-ranking members of the king's council, most of whom were associates of Suffolk. Working in close cooperation with the London civic authorities, these men found that the duchess and her associates had invoked demons and evil spirits to find out when Henry VI would die and whether Eleanor, as wife of the heir presumptive, would become queen. Allegedly, a waxen image had been fashioned to precipitate the king's death. Moreover, Eleanor and Bolingbroke were imputed to have conspired against the lives of leading councillors. Late in October, the duchess was again brought before an ecclesiastical tribunal and charged with necromancy, sorcery and treason. Eleanor steadfastly maintained her innocence, claiming that she had solely turned to magic in order to conceive by Gloucester. Nonetheless, she and her alleged accomplices were found guilty and handed over to the secular authorities. One of her associates died in the tower before he could be executed; another was burned at Smithfield; Roger Bolingbroke suffered the full punishment for treason. The duchess herself abjured her heresies; on 6 November, the council pronounced her formal divorce from Gloucester; three days later, she was sentenced to proceed, with a burning taper in her hand, from Westminster to different London churches on three market days. After Eleanor had fulfilled this penance, she was handed into the custody of members of the royal household and kept in strict confinement for her remaining life.

During all this time Gloucester had been unable to do much for his wife. He may have feared that he would be implicated as well, if he openly protested against her treatment, and even if the court had not been determined on her destruction, the duke would have found it difficult to defend Eleanor once she had admitted to some of the charges against her. Still, Gloucester did not remain entirely passive. Early in November, he made another donation of books to Oxford.¹⁴ Eight of the ten volumes he gave on that occasion, were

¹⁴ ANSTEY, i, 202-4; SAMMUT, pp. 71-2.

clearly destined for the faculty of divinity.¹⁵ Since several members of that faculty were sitting on the committee that was to adjudge in Eleanor's case, it seems likely that the donation of November 1441, may not, as has hitherto been presumed, have been just another indication of the duke's enlightened and disinterested promotion of learning, but a desperate attempt to impress Eleanor's judges in her favour.¹⁶

Predictably, this bid to protect her from impending destruction failed to save Eleanor. Prior to her arraignment, the duchess's relations with Henry VI seem to have been friendly, even close.¹⁷ But the king was impressionable and apparently afraid of attempts on his life.¹⁸ Eleanor's indictment for treason was, therefore, bound to destroy the last vestiges of trust Henry VI may have had in Gloucester.¹⁹ The close involvement of the council in the proceedings against Eleanor would have convinced even Gloucester's few remaining sympathisers in that body of the inopportunity of taking his side. Meanwhile, the implication of the councillors in the trial against his wife guaranteed that Gloucester would never think of seeking their assistance for a move against Suffolk. Most important, however, the strike against Eleanor had demolished Gloucester's potential as popular leader. Particularly in London, the duchess had always had a poor reputation. Contemporary sources cast her as a proud and ambitious adventuress, and she had apparently done little to change that image.²⁰ Eleanor's enemies would thus have lent ready credence to allegations that Gloucester had been wax in her hands; and they would have rejoiced at her public humiliation.²¹ The sympathizers of the duchess, on the other hand, would have been shocked at Gloucester's inability to protect his wife from disgrace. Either way, the duke was exposed as a man who was impotent to control and protect his immediate *familia*, and who was thus, by implication, even

¹⁵ For the inventory of that donation, drawn up on 10 November 1441, see *ibid.*, pp. 71–2.

¹⁶ Eleanor's jury was constituted by the leading bishops and several doctors and masters of divinity, GRIFFITHS, 'Eleanor Cobham', pp. 244–5. For the traditional interpretation of Gloucester's donation see SCHIRMER, p. 47; WEISS, p. 66; SAMMUT, pp. 50–51.

¹⁷ GRIFFITHS, 'Eleanor Cobham', pp. 234–5; VICKERS, p. 257.

¹⁸ GRIFFITHS, *Henry VI*, pp. 252–3; WOLFFE, pp. 127–9; THOMAS, pp. 264–5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 262; VICKERS, p. 279.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 277–8; GRIFFITHS, 'Eleanor Cobham', pp. 235–6.

²¹ THOMAS, p. 263.

less able to fulfill the role of self-professed defender of public interest which he had last claimed in his *Declaracone*. The public nature of Eleanor's penance and the spectacular execution of her closest associates had ensured that this message reached as large a popular audience as possible. Eleanor's disgrace had thus effectively neutralised Gloucester's potential as opposition leader against Suffolk's regime.

Moreover, the move against his wife may have been a cynical measure to ensure Gloucester's future good behaviour with regard to the court. As a prisoner for life, the duchess was in the hands of the household coterie, and her trial had demonstrated the readiness of the new regime to destroy her. Gloucester would thus have been aware that every move he made against Suffolk and his allies, potentially endangered Eleanor's life. Given that his relations with her had manifestly not been dictated by political or dynastic considerations, the knowledge that her survival depended on his action, may have sufficed to ensure the duke's collaboration with her gaolers. Yet, even if he had been indifferent to Eleanor's fate, the duke may have feared for his own life. During her trial, Gloucester had never been as much as mentioned as a potential accomplice of his wife's misdeeds.²² It seems, however, inconceivable that Eleanor should have dabbled in the occult without her husband's knowledge. A treatise on medicinal magic, which Eleanor had given to him, suggests, rather, that Gloucester had shared his wife's interests and, possibly, even participated in her activities.²³ The duke may, therefore, have feared that one false move against the regime on his part would encourage Eleanor's keepers to put her under duress, until she would—rightly or wrongly—incriminate him as well; and the way her alleged accessories had been dealt with by the authorities may have warned Gloucester that once this legal machinery turned against him, he would inevitably meet the same horrible end as Bolingbroke.²⁴

Whether the duke loved or feared his wife, Eleanor's incarceration had made her a hostage of his good behaviour and ensured the

²² Ibid., pp. 263–4.

²³ VICKERS, pp. 433–4; SAMMUT, p. 102.

²⁴ Bolingbroke may have been tried and executed as a symbolic substitute for Gloucester. During his recantation, the clerk was exposed with a sword and sceptre in his hands and wearing a paper crown, GRIFFITHS, 'Eleanor Cobham' p. 240. This would make sense, if it had been intended use Bolingbroke as a stooge to represent Gloucester's alleged ambitions to usurp the throne.

duke's tolerance of and possible collaboration with Suffolk's regime.²⁵ Gloucester's career in politics was thus not yet over by the time Eleanor Cobham returned from her last public penance in London into the custody of Suffolk's men, but it had radically changed its character. It is here proposed that as a result, Gloucester's action in the spheres of culture and politics took a new direction.

²⁵ THOMAS, pp. 264, p. 274, p. 285. Was it exasperation with his wife, which encouraged Gloucester, during this period, to commission Antonio Beccaria with a translation of Boccaccio's *Corbaccio*? On this translation see WEISS, pp. 45–6; SAMMUT, p. 22, pp. 128–9.

CHAPTER NINE

GLOUCESTER'S ROLE IN ENGLISH POLITICS 1441 TO 1445 AND HIS DONATION TO OXFORD OF 1444

Gloucester's political action in the aftermath of his wife's disgrace marked a radical break from the policies he had advocated in the previous two decades. The duke did no longer protest against government decisions that favoured the Beauforts. He did not participate in the royal foundations of Eton and King's College, Cambridge, although these educational benefactions were advertised as expressions of Henry VI's sovereign will; instead, Gloucester persevered in his independent patronage of Oxford. Finally, the duke lent active support to Henry VI's marriage with Margaret of Anjou, even though this match held no guarantee of the survival of the Lancastrian dominion in France.

The following investigation of Gloucester's career between 1441 and 1445 departs from the assumption that the erosion of the duke's policy during this period was not, as has hitherto been assumed, due to his political resignation after the Cobham scandal, but reflected Gloucester's efforts to negotiate his way in English politics after the incarceration of his wife had made him a pawn of Suffolk's regime.

The objective of this investigation is, first, to draw attention to the transformations in the themes that had dominated the duke's action in the preceding two decades, now caused by Suffolk's rise to power; second, to relate his conduct during this period with his policy in the 1420s and 1430s, and third, to establish a basis for the understanding of Gloucester's ultimate downfall in 1445.

During the campaigning season of 1442, the French made dangerous advances on Gascony. As the English had "come to identify their king's claims in France . . . with the crown in its collective sense, embodying the community and its interest", neglect of the continental dominion was likely to rouse popular opposition against Suffolk's regime.¹ Henry VI's lavish household expenditure and his careless

¹ KEEN, M., 'The End of the Hundred Years War: Lancastrian France and Lancastrian England', in JONES, M./VALE, M. (eds.), *England and her Neighbours*,

distribution of patronage, combined with a decline in customs revenue, meant, however, that the cost of the protection of Lancastrian France could not be met by the crown; nor could it be raised through subsidies and taxes, for Englishmen had become ever less willing to make sacrifices for the war.² Consequently, Suffolk was unable to procure the necessary funding for a resolute foreign policy.

Predictably, it was not long before Beaufort offered his financial support for a large expeditionary force that was to attack Charles VII's army deep in his own territory to prevent a new French offensive.³ During Henry VI's minority and early reign, the cardinal's every contribution towards the war in France had tightened his stranglehold on English politics. The sums which Beaufort offered to the government in 1442/3 surpassed all his previous loans; Suffolk may, therefore, have rightly feared that in return for his money, Beaufort would demand a commensurate degree of influence in government.⁴ This was likely to jeopardise the earl's ascendancy; yet, without the cardinal's loans, Suffolk's days in power would be limited. The earl therefore needed to find a way to secure Beaufort's financial support without allowing him to regain control of domestic affairs.

This may have been where Gloucester entered the plan. After the Cobham affair, the duke had temporarily disappeared from the political scene. Approximately at the same time as Beaufort, however, he once more began to attend the council meetings.⁵ Gloucester's conduct in the ensuing months was uncharacteristic. Never before a notable lender, he now promised to make a sizeable contribution to the war effort.⁶ He refrained from his customary active participation in the council debates and kept his silence even though the decision to entrust the command of the projected French campaign to the cardinal's nephew, John Beaufort, earl of Somerset must have appeared to Gloucester as the culmination of all the evils of Beaufort-dominated politics that he had denounced since 1426.⁷

1066-1453. *Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais* (London, 1989), pp. 297-311, at p. 297.

² GRIFFITHS, pp. 376-401; HARRISS, pp. 301-2; pp. 325-8.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 334-5.

⁴ GRIFFITHS, p. 392.

⁵ THOMAS, p. 274; WATTS, p. 150.

⁶ *P.P.C.*, v, 202.

⁷ *P.P.C.*, v, 223-9; JONES, M., 'John Beaufort, duke of Somerset and the French

It has been assumed that the duke returned to the council of his own accord; because, although he was a broken man, he had retained his interest in policy-making.⁸ Gloucester's atypical silence during the council debates has been interpreted as a mark of his unwavering commitment to the French war, as an attempt to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of Henry VI or as an indication of his fear that outspoken opposition to the dominant interest would seal his own fate and that of Eleanor Cobham.⁹

By contrast, the present investigation proposes that Gloucester's reappearance on the council in the summer of 1442 may have been staged by Suffolk. In 1428, and again in 1433/4, Gloucester had publicly advocated an aggressive policy against Charles VII. A loan on his part toward the projected French expedition would, therefore, have given John Beaufort's campaign the appearance of an authentic Lancastrian enterprise and invested Suffolk's foreign policy with an air of continuity. At the same time, another of Gloucester's vociferous attacks on Beaufort, on the model of his *Declaracion*, might have reminded the cardinal of his own political vulnerability. Such strategic instrumentalisation of Gloucester would have allowed Suffolk to check a revival of Beaufort's influence without involving the court. This way the fragile entente between Beaufort and the new regime would not have been put at risk and the cardinal's willingness to lend to the government would not have been jeopardised.

If this was Suffolk's script early in 1442, Gloucester seems to have been prepared to play along with it only as far as it was absolutely necessary. His promise of a loan towards the Somerset expedition was qualified by ambiguous allusions to the forced nature of this promise.¹⁰ The duke's attendance at the deliberations concerning the terms of Beaufort's loan was characterised by silent observance. On the few occasions when Gloucester's tongue did get the better of him, it was for sarcastic comments on the government's dependence on Beaufort such as that reported in the minutes of 25 May 1443:

expedition of 1443', in GRIFFITHS, R.A. (ed.), *Patronage, Crown and Provinces* (Gloucester, 1981), pp. 79–102; THOMAS, pp. 282–5; HARRISS, pp. 332–7.

⁸ VICKERS, p. 280; THOMAS, p. 276.

⁹ Ibid., p. 276, p. 279, p. 285.

¹⁰ Commenting on his loan of August 1442, Gloucester stated that he would go "as fer as any man wol take him in this the Kynges necessitee", *P.P.C.*, v, 202.

at the which day that my said lord cardinal's patent was read in the abovesaid place and before his departing from the same place, he said that he would have his patent after the minute that was made and else he would lend no money; the which minute was afterwards read and passed. And my lord of Gloucester said at the time that it was reading before my said lords: "What needeth it be read sith that it is passed my lord? For mine uncle saith plainly that he will lend no money unless that he have it under that form".¹¹

Resistance to the cardinal had been a leitmotif of Gloucester's career for almost two decades, and between 1440 and 1443 Beaufort had done nothing to explain the duke's unaccustomed restraint from further opposition to the cardinal. Could it be, that Gloucester's atypical silence during the council deliberations of 1442/3 did not testify to a change of mind with regard to Beaufort, but was an indication that the duke had seen through Suffolk's plans to instrumentalise him in his struggle with the prelate and that he had resolved that however much he loathed Beaufort, he would not become a pawn in Suffolk's scramble for supremacy? In that case, it could be argued that in response to the changing power constellation in English government during the early 1440s, one of the dominant themes of Gloucester's career since the mid-1420s went underground to be replaced by the duke's muted opposition to Suffolk's court regime.

Presumably this muted opposition may found expression in Gloucester's abstention from participation in the foundation of Eton College and King's College, Cambridge. From 1440 onwards, Henry VI's government began to allocate large portions of the king's income from the duchy of Lancaster to the foundation of Eton and King's College, Cambridge. Proposing that the royal foundations were established at the king's personal initiative, Griffiths and Wolffe have cited the example of these benefactions in support of their hypothesis that the early 1440s witnessed the self-confident assertion of Henry VI's personal rule.¹²

It has been argued above that throughout the minority and early reign of Henry VI, Gloucester had focused on promoting the king's sovereignty. Had the royal foundations indeed been an expression of Henry VI's independent initiative, one would, therefore, expect to find the duke, whose interest in educational benefaction was attested

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

¹² WOLFFE, pp. 135–45; GRIFFITHS, pp. 242–9.

by his 1439 donation to Oxford, among their foremost patrons. Yet Gloucester steered conspicuously clear of involvement in Eton and King's College. Perhaps he disapproved of the wholesale investment of Henry VI's income from his noble estate into the royal foundations; perhaps the duke was unwilling to cooperate with the other benefactors of Eton and King's, some of whom had masterminded his wife's downfall.¹³ Yet, in the light of his conduct on the council in 1442/3, it seems equally likely that Gloucester thought that Henry VI had merely lent his name to Eton and King's College, while the real initiative for these projects came from Suffolk, who conceived of the royal foundations as an ideal way of uniting the king, the court, and the still powerful council in a joint venture apt to fulfil the same integrative functions as a military campaign.¹⁴ In that case, the duke's absence from the list of patrons of Eton and King's would have been guided by the same rationale as his uncharacteristic silence during council deliberations of 1442/3: an implicit refusal to be co-opted by Suffolk.¹⁵

Meanwhile, Gloucester continued his independent patronage of Oxford. Early in 1444, he gave 135 manuscripts to the university. Among them were sixty-eight works on history, ethics, rhetoric, and literature, many of which had only recently been published in Italy.¹⁶ How had these books come into Gloucester's possession? Some time in mid-1437, the duke had requested the bishop of Bayeux, Zanone da Castiglione, who was then in Italy, to acquire, in his name, recent publications by Italian authors.¹⁷ Soon, the role of Gloucester's

¹³ For the supporters of the royal foundations see WATTS, p. 170. For their implication in the proceedings against Eleanor compare VICKERS, p. 281; HARRISS, p. 322; GRIFFITHS, 'Eleanor Cobham', pp. 244–5.

¹⁴ Compare WATTS, pp. 167–71.

¹⁵ Significantly, Beaufort also refrained from patronage of Eton and King's. Instead he made donations to Winchester college and invested in his own foundation at St Cross, HARRISS, pp. 369–71. Only as he lay dying, the cardinal finally decided to make a bequest to the royal foundations. For the dubious motivation of that bequest see McFARLANE, 'Deathbed', p. 131. The fact that both Gloucester and Beaufort, the two most prominent protagonists of English politics in the decades between 1420 and 1440, abstained from involvement in the royal foundations, suggests that both men had their reservations about the project and were not prepared to lend their name to it.

¹⁶ The full inventory is printed by SAMMUT, pp. 77–84. For the historical, literary and rhetorical works, see *ibid.*, nos. 206–74; *Duke Humfrey's Library*, pp. 24–5.

¹⁷ Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 827 (cited from now on as DECEMBRIO, P.C., 'Epistolary'), f. 31v (Zanone da Castiglione to Decembrio, autumn 1437), 'Habui nuper litteras illius principis qui maximo studio et affectu me hortatur ut

literary agent in Italy had devolved on Castiglione's acquaintance, the Milanese humanist Pier Candido Decembrio.¹⁸ From 1439 onwards, Decembrio was charged with the selection and acquisition of classical texts and recent humanist publications for Gloucester, and until 1443 he dispatched more than forty Italian manuscripts to England.¹⁹

For a long time, it has been assumed that Gloucester acquired these works for his private library in a bid to emulate Italian collectors such as Alfonso of Aragon or Federigo da Montefeltro.²⁰ Only recently has it been proposed that the books Decembrio bought for Gloucester, had never been meant for the duke's private collection but that they had always been intended for Oxford.²¹ Several indications support this hypothesis: Gloucester first requested Zanone da Castiglione to provide him with Italian texts shortly after the academic authorities at Oxford had appealed for his help in the recovery of Henry V's books.²² This coincidence suggests that the duke's request to Zanone was motivated by his ambition to acquire books for the university. Moreover, had Gloucester bought the Italian texts for his own collection, one would expect them to have remained in his hands. Yet, the 1452 catalogue of King's College, Cambridge, which lists books from the duke's private library that were seized after his sudden death in 1447, contains only seventeen historical or literary works. The majority of these were standard texts that could have been found in any larger late medieval cathedral library of northern Europe; most of the books that Decembrio had sent him, were thus apparently no longer in Gloucester's possession by the time of his death.²³ Finally, had the duke commissioned the Italian books for his private enjoyment, one would expect them to have

opera et translationes huius nostri temporis doctissimorum virorum illic propere destinare festinem"; Zanone's activity as Gloucester's middleman is discussed in detail below, Part Two, chapter thirteen.

¹⁸ Discussed below, Part Three, chapter eighteen, pp. 222–32.

¹⁹ WEISS, pp. 58–9; SAMMUT, pp. 36–44, pp. 189–203.

²⁰ VICKERS, pp. 409–13; SCHIRMER, pp. 55–9; WEISS, pp. 58–65, pp. 68–9; HAY, pp. 329–30; RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 153–5.

²¹ See A.C. de la Mare's introduction to SAMMUT, p. xiii; *Duke Humfrey's Library*, p. 20.

²² For the university's appeal see above, chapter seven, pp. 84–6.

²³ SAMMUT, pp. 93–4. (O. Distinctio, except items no. 152, 155–6, 166–9.) The standard texts comprised two works by Cicero, three texts by Seneca, two copies of Valerius Maximus, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Virgil's *Bucolica* with a commentary and Caesar's historical works. Less common were the duke's copies of Sallust, Quintilian, Poggio's *De Avaritia*, Frontinus, Statius, and Horatius Flaccus.

been luxury copies that reflected Gloucester's status and aristocratic tastes. Yet, if the few surviving specimen are in any way representative, then the books that reached the duke through Decembrio's agency were generally not representational objects but plain text books that would have been ideally suited for academic use.²⁴ Therefore it seems highly likely that from 1437 onwards, Gloucester systematically acquired Italian publications with the aim of donating them to the university of Oxford.

What could have been the rationale for these acquisitions? To answer this question, it is helpful to consider the 1444 donation in relation to Gloucester's earlier gift to the university of 1439. Then, the principal beneficiaries of the duke's generosity had been the faculties of medicine and theology.²⁵ Five years later, the pattern was different. With twenty-one theological works, the faculty of divinity was again generously provided for.²⁶ The faculty of medicine, however, received only a meagre three volumes in 1444.²⁷ Instead, the faculty of law, which had previously not been considered at all, reached sudden prominence as recipient of twenty-one volumes.²⁸ This distribution suggests, that the 1444 donation was intended as a supplement to the earlier gift of 1439, and that Gloucester aimed to spread his patronage evenly across all faculties of the university.

The Italian books fit into that scheme, because, in the same way in which theological tracts and legal manuals were needed for the teaching of divinity and law, these texts on history, literature and rhetoric were geared towards the requirements of the arts course. In 1439, the artists had only received a few standard works from Gloucester.²⁹ This may have spurred the duke's ambition to make a generous contribution to the arts faculty in the future. Humanist translations and editions of the classics from Italy were quickly gaining a reputation for being superior to northern productions and Gloucester may, therefore, have determined to buy the teaching

²⁴ *Duke Humfrey's Library*, p. 20.

²⁵ See above, chapter seven, p. 85.

²⁶ SAMMUT, pp. 73–5, nos. 140–63 (possibly except nos. 156–7).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 74–8, nos. 152 (?), 154, 201.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 75–7, nos. 164–87 (except nos. 170 and 185).

²⁹ Out of the 129 books which the duke had given to the university in 1439, only seventeen had been literary, rhetorical or historical works, SAMMUT, pp. 69–70, nos. 112–29. Fifteen of these were standard works; only two—Coluccio Salutati's *Epistolae* (no. 117) and Quintilian's *De Institutione* (no. 119)—would have been unknown in England, RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', p. 72.

materials for the arts faculty at Oxford in Italy, entrusting first Zanone da Castiglione, and later Decembrio, with the selection and acquisition of suitable texts.³⁰

The emphasis on literary, historical and ethical works (and the absence of treatises on arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) in Gloucester's 1444 donation to Oxford, has hitherto been interpreted as an indication of the duke's desire to replace the 'medieval' canon of the seven *artes liberales* (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music) with the five *studia humanitatis* (grammar, rhetoric, history, poetics, ethics). Possibly, this shift of emphasis was indeed an expression of Gloucester's personal tastes; in view of Decembrio's important role in the selection of texts for this donation it appears, however, also possible that the predominance of the *humaniora* merely reflected the predilections of the duke's agent.³¹ Moreover, it seems conceivable that Gloucester bought the Italian books in response to specific requests from Oxford. During the first half of the fifteenth century, arts teaching at Oxford shifted away from the mathematical and scientific disciplines towards historical and literary study.³² Finally, as David Rundle has pointed out, Gloucester was the most prominent but not the only devotee of the *studia humanitatis* in England.³³ His putative desire to promote these studies on Italian models may thus have coincided with indigenous English developments and their confluence prepared the ground for the English reception of humanism in the decades after 1450.

It has been argued above, that the duke's initial decision to patronise the university may have been inspired by his wish to honour the memory of Henry V, and that the hope of winning the support of the commons in the parliament of 1439/40 may have acted as a catalyst for Gloucester's first donation of 1439. What, then, was the motivation of his gift to the university of 1444? It is here proposed that in the aftermath of the Cobham affair, the duke perceived his second major donation to Oxford as a way to prevent the appro-

³⁰ KRISTELLER, P.O., 'The European Diffusion of Italian Humanism', *Italica*, xxxix (1962), 1–20, repr. in id., *Studies in Renaissance Thoughts and Letters* (4 vols., Rome, 1956–96), ii, 147–65, at pp. 155–6.

³¹ For Decembrio's role as Gloucester's advisor see SAMMUT, pp. 35–8 and below, Part Three, chapter eighteen, pp. 227–8.

³² CATTO, J.I., 'Scholars and Studies in Renaissance Oxford', in id./EVANS, R. (eds.) *History of the University of Oxford*, pp. 769–83, at p. 774.

³³ RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 77–9 and passim.

priation of his posthumous reputation by Suffolk's regime and as an opportunity to provide for his own spiritual welfare after his death.

In 1444, Gloucester was in his early fifties; by aristocratic standards this was not very old, yet his brother Bedford had died in his mid-forties and Gloucester himself may have had a history of poor health; besides, after the Cobham trial, the acute feeling of his political vulnerability may have served the duke as a permanent reminder of his own mortality.³⁴ This apparently encouraged him to provide for his spiritual welfare and to take care that he would be commemorated in a way that was compatible with the self-image he had created during his lifetime. In 1443, the duke allocated £ 433 6s. 8d. to the establishment of his chantry tomb at the Abbey of St Albans, his favoured religious house in England.³⁵ This monument has suffered considerable mutilations; its remains suggest, however, that it was similar in style to Henry V's chantry tomb at Westminster Abbey. Decorated with Gloucester's arms and representations of other royal benefactors of St Albans, the tomb had clearly been intended to glorify the house of Lancaster and blazon the duke's status as a prince of the blood royal in perpetuity.³⁶

A similar desire to shape his posthumous reputation may have informed the duke's continued patronage of Oxford. Apparently all books he gave to the university bore Gloucester's coat of arms as a label on the binding with the inscription "Ex dono illustrissimi principis et domini. Domini Humfridis fratris regum et patrui. Ducis Gloucestriae comitis Pembrochie et camerarii Anglie".³⁷ Together with the duke's autograph motto on the flyleaf and his exlibris at the end of each manuscript, these labels would have acted as constant reminders of the his generosity as patron of letters and his exalted status as a scion of the royal family.³⁸ Since Gloucester's books were intended for public use and as they covered the whole spectrum of learning, this message was guaranteed to reach as large an audience at Oxford as possible; and the university's offer, in July

³⁴ VICKERS, p. 281; THOMAS, pp. 304–6.

³⁵ VICKERS, pp. 439–40.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 331, pp. 439–40.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 429.

³⁸ *Duke Humfrey's Library*, p. 21. Compare also Rundle's interesting speculation that Gloucester passed on gifts of books he himself had been presented by his political allies in order to document a virtual affinity, RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 151–7.

1444, to call the new library building, which was to house Gloucester's donations, after the duke, ensured that his glory would be heralded to future generations of scholars.³⁹ The books Gloucester gave to Oxford, and the library that was built in his name, thus served representational and commemorative functions similar to the duke's sepulchral monument at St Albans.

This solicitude for his own posthumous reputation can be interpreted as an indication of Gloucester's desire to define a demarcation line between himself and Suffolk's regime. That the court oligarchy felt the smart can be gauged by its attempts to co-opt the duke at least posthumously: only days after Gloucester's death in 1447, parts of his property were granted to King's College. Soon after, the duke's remaining books, which he had bequeathed to Oxford, were seized by the government and presented to the royal foundation at Cambridge.⁴⁰

Alongside their function as a monument to Gloucester's worldly glory, his donations to Oxford may, just like his chantry tomb, also have fulfilled a spiritual function. One would have expected the duke to have founded a chantry or—given his interest in learning—a college, to provide for the salvation of his soul. Yet the establishment of such institutions was costly, and generous endowment was required to ensure their survival.⁴¹ At the height of his power, between 1432 and 1436, Gloucester's income from annuities and landed estates had, according to Thomas' computations, reached approximately £ 6000, placing the duke among the five richest magnates in the realm.⁴² Yet, once the political tide began to turn against him after 1437, Gloucester's financial situation rapidly deteriorated. He had to accept dramatic cutbacks of his annuity as councillor. Moreover, he no longer received his salary directly from the Exchequer but had to collect it from a great variety of sources; this rendered it increasingly difficult for him to realise the huge income he had

³⁹ ANSTEY, i, 244–6; RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', p. 157.

⁴⁰ ANSTEY, i, 251–4, 258, 259–61, 285–7, 295–8, 318–9; VICKERS, pp. 302–3; for an approximate inventory of the books that went to King's see SAMMUT, pp. 85–94.

⁴¹ Archbishop Chichele's expenditure of some £ 7000 between 1439 and 1443 on his foundation of All Souls at Oxford may give an indication of the cost of such large-scale institutions, EVANS, T.A.R./FAITH, R.J., 'College Estates and University Finances 1350–1500', in CATTO, J.I./EVANS, R. (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford*, pp. 635–707, at p. 637.

⁴² THOMAS, pp. 159–60, p. 162.

on paper.⁴³ Lacking a legitimate heir, Gloucester had, even before the Cobham affair, been forced to accept reversions of his lands; and after the disgrace of his wife, the duke's offices and landed endowment were systematically appropriated by Suffolk and his satellites.⁴⁴

As a result, Gloucester was decreasingly in a position to raise the sums necessary for the foundation of a chantry or college that would have been in keeping with his status as a prince royal and therefore needed to find a less costly but equally prestigious way to secure his spiritual welfare. Patronage of the university library at Oxford may have proved an ideal solution; for by contrast to a conventional chantry, a library thrived not on its landed endowment but on the intellectual capital inscribed in its wealth of books. Despite his financial difficulties after the Cobham affair, Gloucester would still have been able to acquire manuscripts for Oxford on a princely scale; particularly since the university did not require expensive luxury copies but plain, well-made textbooks. Meanwhile, the university's dire funding situation and the lack of books at Oxford ensured that the duke's donations were greeted with enthusiasm.⁴⁵ Already in response to his first donation, the academic authorities had announced that Gloucester would be included in the university prayers in perpetuity; and over the years, these privileges were confirmed and systematically extended.⁴⁶ His gift to the university of 1444 therefore had the same effect as the endowment of a chantry or the foundation of a college: it was an investment in his spiritual welfare at a time when the duke may have lived in constant fear that the snare that had been set for him by Suffolk could snap close at any moment.⁴⁷

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 164–5.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 272, p. 298.

⁴⁵ Compare ANSTEY, i, 177–9 (November 1439), 197–9 (February 1441), 202–4 (November 1441), 227–9 (late 1443), 240–2 (early 1444), 254–5 (1446).

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 190–91 (statute that Gloucester and Eleanor were to be commemorated among the benefactors in every mass said by the Chaplain of the university in perpetuity, 25 November 1439), pp. 216–7 (confirmation of the preceding statute, January 1441), pp. 255–7 (statute that Gloucester's benefactions should not only be commemorated at Oxford but also in sermons at important places elsewhere, 1446).

⁴⁷ ROSENTHAL, J.T., 'Lancastrian Bishops and Educational Benefaction', in BARRON, C.M./HARPER-BILL, C. (eds.), *The Church in Pre-Reformation Society. Essays in Honour of F.R.H. Du Boulay* (Woodbridge, 1985), pp. 199–211, at p. 206, "books and associated items were just another tangible category in the whole web of a reciprocal relationship linking the living with the dead and comprising one part of a table of equivalents between worldly goods and spiritual services."

As a supplement to his earlier gifts to the university, Gloucester's second generous donation to Oxford in 1444 was thus presumably as much inspired by political considerations as his benefaction of 1439. Then, the duke had been at the zenith of his power and his gifts had apparently been intended both to perpetuate the memory of Henry V and to win himself popular support. In 1444, Gloucester may have instrumentalised his continued patronage of Oxford as a means to indicate his independence of the government projects of Eton and King's College, as an opportunity to perpetuate his own worldly glory, and as a bid for his spiritual salvation after he had lost his political independence to Suffolk's camarilla.

The donation of 1444 can thus be read as an expression of Gloucester's tacit resistance to Suffolk which, it has here been proposed, as a new leitmotif of his action was a successor, during the early 1440s, to the duke's enmity of Beaufort. At the same time, Gloucester's attempt to create, by his gifts to Oxford, a magnificent affirmation of his status as Lancastrian prince, could be interpreted as the beginning of his emancipation from the unconditional subservience to Henry VI which had characterised the duke's policy since 1422. In view of Suffolk's ascendancy (which would have been impossible without Henry VI's concurrence), Gloucester was, therefore, apparently beginning tentatively to re-establish his independence. This muted resistance was, however, counterbalanced by the duke's occasional collaboration with the regime as is demonstrated by his apparent support for the Angevin alliance.

By autumn 1443, it was apparent that John Beaufort had bungled the chances for a military settlement of the French question.⁴⁸ Suffolk's regime therefore sought to reach a diplomatic agreement with Charles VII, pushing for a mutually acceptable peace or—failing that—an extended truce that would grant the war-weary English some respite from military engagement and give the court clique more time to consolidate its ascendancy. Ideally, such an agreement was to be confirmed by a dynastic alliance between the twenty-one year old Henry VI and a French princess. Late in 1443, Suffolk and his allies therefore began to consider a marriage between the king and Margaret of Anjou, a niece of Charles VII's queen.⁴⁹ Henry

⁴⁸ HARRISS, pp. 341–4.

⁴⁹ GRIFFITHS, pp. 482–90; WOLFFE, pp. 169–83.

VI's malleability made it easy to win him for this project. Gloucester's approval, however, was unlikely to be forthcoming; for only in 1442, the duke had enthusiastically endorsed an ultimately unavailing plan of a match between Henry VI and an Armagnac princess. A prominent opponent of Charles VII, the count of Armagnac was said to have offered a huge dowry in money, lands and men to help defend the borders of Gascony. An alliance with Armagnac might thus have created sufficient pressure on Charles VII to reach an acceptable and lasting peace.⁵⁰ No such advantages were likely to come from the projected Angevin alliance. Margaret's father, René of Anjou, could neither offer an appropriate dowry nor exercise sufficient influence on the French king to obtain more than a short-lived truce. Such a temporary agreement, however, was incompatible with Gloucester's doctrine that saving a permanent peace, only continued demonstration of military strength could avert the loss of Lancastrian France.⁵¹

For these reasons one would expect the duke to have adopted the same policy of silent opposition to the Angevin alliance that had characterised his conduct during the council deliberations of 1442/3. Surprisingly, however, Gloucester lent his active support to the scheme. When Margaret arrived in England in April 1445, the duke, in his function as chamberlain of the realm, offered her a splendid reception.⁵² In the ensuing parliament, Gloucester publicly commended Suffolk for his role in the negotiation of the marriage contract.⁵³

The duke's motives for lending his support to the Angevin alliance cannot be ascertained. Perhaps he did indeed, as Thomas suggested, for the briefest of times hope that Henry VI's marriage with Margaret would pave the way for a permanent peace; perhaps the duke had lost his faith in Henry VI, and determined, cynically, to exploit Suffolk's dependence on his own approval to the king's marriage to benefit his incarcerated wife.⁵⁴ That Gloucester's backing of the

⁵⁰ THOMAS, pp. 276–7.

⁵¹ The persistent myth of Gloucester as leader of a 'war party' in the English council, upheld by VICKERS, pp. 259–60, pp. 286–7 and (implicitly) by GRIFFITHS, pp. 237–8, has been convincingly refuted by KEEN, pp. 309–10.

⁵² *Chronicles of London*, p. 155; THOMAS, pp. 290–91.

⁵³ *R.P.*, v, 73.

⁵⁴ THOMAS, pp. 290–91. About the same time the Angevin project was first proposed in the council, Eleanor's keeper received orders for her transfer from Chester castle to more luxurious lodgings at Kenilworth, GRIFFITHS, 'Eleanor Cobham', p. 249.

Angevin alliance expressed his real opinion on the subject seems, however, improbable. It would be tempting to deduce that if the duke, for whatever reasons, considered it opportune to bow to Suffolk's authority in the Angevin question, he increasingly employed his literary patronage as a medium for the expression of his dissent. The evidence contradicts such an interpretation. Two orations by Gloucester's Italian secretary, Antonio Beccaria, which have survived largely unnoticed in a Vatican manuscript, demonstrate, on the contrary, that the duke did not hesitate to put the rhetorical abilities of his humanist "poeta et orator" at Suffolk's service. Early in 1444, Beccaria drafted a speech for the ambassadors, who accompanied Suffolk to Tours to negotiate the Angevin alliance with the French. Addressed to Charles VII, Beccaria's *exhortatio* was an entreaty to make the projected marriage an occasion for permanent peace between France and England.⁵⁵ Twelve months later, Beccaria appealed to convocation, encouraging the bishops to make a liberal contribution towards the cost of the impending wedding festivities so that they would become a proud manifestation of English prosperity.⁵⁶

Beccaria's orations show that Gloucester employed his humanist secretary not only for the translation and composition of literary texts, but also for the formulation of political oratory. This offers important insights into the scope of Beccaria's duties as Gloucester's "poeta et orator", and may provide some indication of the activity of his predecessor in the duke's household, Tito Livio Frulovisi.⁵⁷ More important, however, Beccaria's political oratory suggests that Gloucester had recourse to literary patronage not only for the assertion of his independence of the court regime, but also, when the need arose, in order to express his subservience to Suffolk's authority.

⁵⁵ BECCARIA, A., 'Oratio exhortatoria ad pacem ad regem Francie pro legatos Anglie . . . anno 1444', Vatican City, B.A.V., MS Vat.lat. 5221 (fifteenth century miscellany containing many pieces concerning English politics in the 1430s and 1440s), ff. 66v–68v. Mentioned in passing by WEISS, *Humanism*, p. 188 and SAMMUT, p. 22.

⁵⁶ BECCARIA, A., 'Oratio exhortatoria ad exigendas pecunias ex maioribus praelatorum Anglie pro subventionem nuptiarum celebrandum regis', MS Vat.lat. 5221, ff. 68v–71r. Beccaria's reference on f. 69r to the "frigoris magnitudo" at the time of the meeting suggests a dating of this oration to the convocation of early 1445.

⁵⁷ For Frulovisi see below Part Three, chapter nineteen, pp. 260–62. Possibly Beccaria's political oratory also provides a hint to the nature of Poggio Bracciolini's activity in Beaufort's service, about which hardly anything is known, see below, *ibid.*, pp. 241–50.

Oscillation between tacit opposition to and unwilling collaboration with the court oligarchy therefore seems to have characterised both Gloucester's political action in the aftermath of the Cobham trial as well as the duke's his literary patronage. Whereas the other dominant elements of Gloucester's policy appear to have undergone a radical transformation in response to the ascendance of Suffolk's regime, the dynamic interrelation between Gloucester's action in the spheres of culture and politics continued thus to characterise his conduct even after the dramatic caesura of the Cobham trial.

CHAPTER TEN

GLOUCESTER'S GIFT TO ALFONSO OF ARAGON AND THE CRISIS OF JULY 1445

In the preceding chapters it has been proposed that Suffolk retained Gloucester at the centre of power because his continued presence in government lent credence to the simulacrum of Henry VI's sovereignty, which was, in turn, the precondition for Suffolk's rule through the court. This dependence on Gloucester would always have carried a danger for Suffolk's regime; for if the duke ever chose to raise his voice against the fragile fiction of Henry VI's sovereignty, the legitimacy of court rule would inevitably have been called into question. Meanwhile, Gloucester, as the authentic representative of Lancastrian interests, would have been able to claim the role of figurehead of the opposition. From 1441 onwards, the threat to his life and that of Eleanor Cobham seems to have ensured his cooperation with the court; in 1445, however, Suffolk's regime may have feared that it would not much longer be able to contain the duke's potential as opposition leader.

Two reasons might have inspired such fears. First, the government envisaged not to extend the commission of Richard duke of York as lieutenant of France beyond September 1445.¹ Gloucester harboured serious misgivings about the truce Suffolk had negotiated at Tours in 1444 as part of the Angevin alliance; he was, therefore, an advocate of continued military presence in Lancastrian France.² York's decommission would, in the duke's eyes, have been tantamount to a covert surrender of the French territories. In 1440, Gloucester had warned that should the continental dominion be lost, "all the Roialme [may] crie, and sey and sorrowfully gruche", and he had made it clear that he was prepared to lead popular opposition against ill-advised government policies.³ In the summer of 1445, Suffolk's regime may, therefore, have feared that, notified of York's projected

¹ WOLFFE, p. 181.

² THOMAS, p. 291.

³ RYMER, v, i, 77.

recall, Gloucester would forsake the circumspection that had characterised his political action since 1441, and launch a public attack on the court.

Second, Suffolk may have worried that in the course of an Anglo-French peace conference that had been scheduled to meet in London in July 1445, facts would come to light which would provoke Gloucester's open protest. Several indications suggest that although no formal agreement to surrender Maine to René of Anjou had been made at Tours, informal understandings had been exchanged.⁴ Suffolk could not have given such assurances without authorisation from Henry VI, his cabinet, and the leading members of the royal council.⁵ Gloucester, however, had apparently not been made privy to these discussions, and it seems as if in the ensuing months, the government had managed to keep Suffolk's promises to the French a secret.⁶ No such secrecy would have been possible any more, once the French embassy had arrived in England; for as heir apparent, Gloucester could not be excluded from the conference. The court coterie had thus every reason to fear that apprised of the full extent of Suffolk's concessions, the outraged duke would openly resist the regime and publicise the classified plans to surrender Maine in a bid to rally popular opposition.⁷

Unknown to Gloucester, the political atmosphere was, therefore, already highly charged when, in July 1445, he apparently decided to make another tug at the fetters that had been laid upon him by Suffolk's regime. On 12 July he sent a valuable manuscript from his private collection to Alfonso of Aragon, the king of Naples and an internationally acclaimed patron of letters.⁸ Three days later, the great French embassy arrived at the English court. In the course of the reception ceremony, Henry VI and Suffolk publicly humiliated Gloucester before the French ambassadors.

Whereas Gloucester's gift to Alfonso and his downfall have previously been discussed in isolation, the following interpretation proposes first, a connection between the duke's gift to the king of Naples and his spectacular degradation during the reception of the French ambassadors; second, it contends that Gloucester's choice of Alfonso

⁴ HARRISS, pp. 345–6; WATTS, p. 224n.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 223–5; HARRISS, p. 346.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

⁷ VICKERS, p. 289.

⁸ SAMMUT, pp. 215–6.

as recipient of his favours, the selection of the manuscript which he gave to the king, and the covering letter that accompanied the gift, were informed by political motives: motives which reflected Gloucester's view of English domestic politics, more than his appreciation of Alfonso's patronage of letters.⁹ Such a reading might allow the tracing of possible lines of continuity that link Gloucester's downfall in July 1445 with his earlier action, and, by following these lines of continuity to their very end, to bring the leitmotif of Gloucester's career into full focus.

Alfonso V of Aragon (1396–1458) was not only a bibliophile but also one of the leading military commanders of his age. His conquest of Naples in 1442, which had united the Aragonese dominion of Sicily with the kingdom of Naples, had put an end to the Angevin reign in Southern Italy and annihilated the legal territorial claims in that region of René of Anjou, the father of Henry VI's prospective bride.¹⁰ In July 1445, when the court oligarchy in England was trying to establish friendly relations with René's ambassadors as participants of the impending Anglo-French peace-conference, Gloucester's advances to the new ruler of Naples and his praise of Alfonso's military prowess in the covering letter to his gift to the king therefore represented an implicit affront to Suffolk's foreign policy and the Angevin alliance.¹¹

This message was reinforced by the provenance of Gloucester's gift to Alfonso. The codex the duke sent to the king of Naples, was a lavishly illuminated copy of Livy's *Roman History* from the library of Charles V, which Bedford had given to Gloucester in 1427.¹² As war booty, this manuscript was an evocative reminder of the Lancastrian victory over Valois France; and its presentation to Alfonso could be interpreted as an indication of Gloucester's intransigent position on the French question, which was diametrically opposed to the court's scheme of establishing friendly relations with Charles

⁹ Gloucester's gift to Alfonso has hitherto been interpreted as a tribute towards one of the leading collectors of his age and as an indication of the duke's desire to herald his own reputation as a lettered prince, compare VICKERS, pp. 375–6; SCHIRMER, p. 40; WEISS, p. 62; BENTLEY, J.H., *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* (Princeton, 1987), p. 62.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 7–13.

¹¹ For the contacts of Suffolk's men with the ambassadors of Anjou see STEVENSON, i, 93–102. For Gloucester's praise of Alfonso see SAMMUT, pp. 215–6, ll. 1–23.

¹² This manuscript is today in Paris, Bibliothèque de Sainte G  n  vi  ve, MS franc. 777; WEISS, p. 62n; SAMMUT, p. 122. For a description see VICKERS, p. 438.

VII. Gloucester's gift to Alfonso could, therefore, be perceived as an act of covert resistance to the dominant powers, similar in character to the duke's sarcastic comments on the court's inability to control Beaufort during the council meetings of 1442/3, and his decision to continue in his independent patronage of Oxford rather than to cooperate with the court in the establishment of the royal foundations.

Moreover the present to Alfonso could be read as an expression of Gloucester's emancipation from his subservience to Henry VI, which had already been implicit in the duke's decision to establish a monument to his own glory as a Lancastrian prince by his donations to Oxford. For almost a quarter of a century, Gloucester had tried to protect the interests of Henry VI; he had sought to teach his nephew statecraft, when he had commissioned the *Fall of Princes* and the *Politics*, and he had attempted to spur the young king's will to power by setting before him the exemplary life of his father. During those decades, Gloucester had professed his unconditional loyalty to the young king, as the legitimate heir to the heroic legacy of Henry V. For himself, the duke had claimed the status of faithful torchbearer of Lancastrian destiny. Now, in the covering letter to Alfonso of 12 July 1445, which his secretary Antonio Beccaria composed for him, Gloucester wistfully observed that the king of Naples was a man

in quo verum illud regium lumen eluceret, quale potissimum principes deceret in quibus contemplari caeteri possint totius magnificentiae et amplitudinis specimen, tum etiam cum me iam in eam aetatem devectum conspicerem, in qua mihi magis conveniret huiusmodi principem et amare et admirari quam imitari posse, cum sit eiusmodi, ut iam delapsa ad senectutem alia potius a me quietudinis studia deposcat. Quapropter, cum dominus Philippus Boyl, legatus tuus, proximis his diebus ad me visitandum venisset . . . atque in tuae virtutis sermonem incidissemus, quam audire atque extolli mirifice delector, tu occurristi mihi dignus eo libri [Titi Livii] munere, quo scribam neminem alium hac nostra aetate nec rerum gestarum excellentia, nec animi virtute ac praestantia ad eum legendum operaque imitanda aptiorem, ut esset mei in te animi et benevolentiae indicium et pignus et mei etiam causa.¹³

This statement could be read as an indirect expression of Gloucester's disappointment at Henry VI's lack of military ambition and intellectual

¹³ SAMMUT, p. 216, ll. 26–32.

responsiveness. Such a disavowal of Henry VI and the implicit acclamation of Alfonso of Aragon as true heir of the spiritual legacy of Henry V would have marked a further departure from the duke's policy of unconditional subservience to his royal nephew. That Gloucester should have chosen an act of literary patronage to express his dissatisfaction with the state of English politics may be seen as an indication that even after he had renounced his loyalty to Henry VI that had been the guiding principle of his action for almost a quarter century, the duke did not draw a line between his action in the spheres of culture and politics, but continued to consider them as equally important and immediately interrelated elements of his policy. For this reason, it is here contended that this integrative approach of culture and politics, which outlasted the other recurrent themes of Gloucester's career, was the leitmotif of his biography as a man of politics and as a patron of culture.

Presumably, Gloucester's gift to Alfonso of Aragon had been intended as no more than a symbolic flexing of muscle in the direction of the court, and there is no proof that the camarilla was apprised of the duke's advances on Alfonso; yet it is hard to imagine that the moves of such an important and potentially unreliable figure as Gloucester remained unmonitored by Suffolk's regime, and at a time when the court may have been already highly apprehensive of Gloucester's potential as an opposition leader, the duke's apparent flirtation with the reassertion of his political independence, and his formal offer of support to a man whom he perceived as a more worthy successor to the heroic legacy of Henry V than his spineless nephew, could easily have been interpreted as a warning that Gloucester was no longer willing to play along with the regime and that he was prepared to give his backing to alternative political forces.

Alfonso of Aragon was far away in Italy; closer to home, however, the duke of York, a collateral member of the Lancastrian kinship nexus and one of the most prominent English military commanders of that period, might, at least in the eyes of Suffolk's men, have presented himself as a potential contender for the role of Gloucester's crown prince.¹⁴ Apparently confirming the worst fears of the court

¹⁴ On York's strained relations with Suffolk's regime during the latter half of the 1440s GRIFFITHS, pp. 506–7; compare, however, the critique of that assessment by WATTS, pp. 237–8.

clique, the duke's gift to Alfonso, only three days before the opening of the Anglo-French peace conference, might thus have provided the spark which unleashed the tempest that hurled Gloucester towards his final destruction.

Indeed, if it is accepted that Suffolk knew about Gloucester's gift to king Alfonso and that he interpreted it as an indication of the duke's unwillingness further to cooperate with the court, this might provide an explanation for Henry VI's and Suffolk's bizarre behaviour toward Gloucester, which the French ambassadors witnessed during their reception at the English court on 15 July 1445. In the course of that ceremony, Henry VI made it a point to signal his disdain for Gloucester's political opinions to the French ambassadors and members of his own government.¹⁵ Later on, Suffolk repeatedly declared before the French diplomats and high-ranking English lords that Gloucester had no influence on the decisions of the English government.¹⁶

These attempts to disown Gloucester as an authentic voice of Lancastrian interest appear too clumsy to have been the result of carefully premeditated action; instead they smack of the improvised and haphazard reaction of a panic-stricken junta.¹⁷ Gloucester's response to these measures is difficult to ascertain. The French ambassadors reported no sign of protest on his part. Perhaps the duke's sense of *raison d'état* was strong enough for him to wish to keep up appearances before the French diplomats; perhaps Gloucester had previously been oblivious of the government apprehensions concerning his person, and was, therefore, so taken by surprise by the attack of 15 July that he was simply too stunned to voice his protest.

The high drama of Gloucester's humiliation before the French ambassadors was followed by anticlimax. The duke retired from the public view, and in the following twelve months the court apparently considered it unnecessary to take more drastic measures against him.¹⁸ Meanwhile, Suffolk's authority continued to ebb. Although he

¹⁵ STEVENSON, i, 110–11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 115–6.

¹⁷ The possibility that Gloucester's downfall may have been precipitated by his simple gift of a book to a foreign potentate might be an indication that Gloucester did not stand alone in his holistic approach to culture and politics, but that it was understood and shared even by his most embittered political opponents.

¹⁸ According to Polydore Vergil, Gloucester, sometime during this period, addressed parliament urging renewed military aggression in France; yet no record of such a

apparently still enjoyed the support of large sections of the nobility, the earl found it increasingly difficult to control the household coterie. Unwilling further to accept Suffolk's predominance, the courtiers now openly exploited Henry VI's largesse and his inexperience in judicial matters and these abuses were beginning to provoke the first adverse reactions amongst the populace.¹⁹ Moreover, it could no longer be overlooked that the government's French policy had failed. The hopes that had been pinned on the liberation of Orléans and the Angevin alliance had been misplaced. Behind the scenes, negotiations about the cession of Maine continued; but it was becoming obvious that Charles VII was unwilling to make substantive concessions in return.²⁰ After the expiry of the truce in April 1447, Suffolk's regime could thus either continue in its diplomatic efforts, or renew the war.²¹ Further negotiations were unlikely to safeguard Lancastrian France. Yet, the government could not afford further engagement in France, and it would have been impossible to win popular support for a military venture that had little chance of lasting success.²² The loss of the continental dominion, however, would put the stability of Suffolk's regime to a serious test; for the blame for this defeat would inevitably be laid on the court oligarchy.

Both on the foreign and on the domestic front, Suffolk's regime was thus increasingly under pressure. Apparently this rekindled fears of Gloucester's potential as opposition leader. In July 1446, Eleanor Cobham was moved from Kenilworth to stricter confinement on the Isle of Man.²³ Shortly afterwards, the regime seems to have made a first attempt to indict Gloucester himself, charging him with the abuse of his judicial powers during the Protectorate. Yet the duke reportedly managed to refute these accusations by a brilliant speech, and the case had to be dropped.²⁴ This was the last time he managed to wriggle out. Late in 1446, Henry VI decided that in the following spring he and Suffolk would travel to France for a per-

speech has survived in the rolls of parliament. VERGIL, P., *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History* (Camden Soc., old ser., xxxix, London, 1844), 69–70, cf. THOMAS, p. 291.

¹⁹ GRIFFITHS, pp. 362–75, pp. 562–92; WOLFFE, pp. 106–34; WATTS, pp. 153–95, pp. 216–21.

²⁰ GRIFFITHS, pp. 490–96. WOLFFE, pp. 184–212.

²¹ WATTS, p. 227.

²² GRIFFITHS, p. 380; KEEN, p. 311.

²³ *P.P.C.*, v, 50–51.

²⁴ VICKERS, pp. 290–91.

sonal meeting with Charles VII. As heir apparent, Gloucester was, notwithstanding his disgrace, still the obvious candidate for the lieutenancy during the king's absence.²⁵ In that function, however, the duke would have been able to reassert his authority to the detriment of the weakened court coterie; and if he had lent his backing to the duke of York, Gloucester might well have become the maker of a new king. His continued presence in English politics had thus finally become an intolerable risk for a court clique whose authority was inexorably disintegrating.²⁶ Fear of Gloucester, combined, perhaps, with the hope that his show trial would temporarily distract public attention from the disastrous state of foreign policy, seems to have determined Suffolk's regime to employ the following parliament for a final reckoning with the duke.

In February 1447, parliament was summoned to Bury St Edmunds, deep in the heartland of Suffolk's territorial power. The king, who was by that time apparently firmly convinced of Gloucester's intention to kill him and usurp the throne, progressed to the meeting-place heavily guarded, and armed men were stationed round the town as rumour spread that Gloucester was planning a popular rising.²⁷ Apparently oblivious to these preparations, the duke, accompanied by a relatively small retinue, arrived at Bury on 18 February to attend what he believed to be public deliberations concerning the king's meeting with Charles VII. Gloucester had hardly settled at his inn, when he was met by a delegation of leading court officials, who put him under arrest and charged him with treason. Three days later, the duke suddenly fell into a coma; another three days later, he was dead.²⁸

Ever since, it has been speculated that Gloucester had been assassinated by Suffolk's henchmen.²⁹ Yet the court would have had nothing to gain from the duke's violent death. On the contrary: a public hearing of Gloucester and his conviction for treason before parliament on the model of the Cobham trial would have allowed Suffolk's clique to demolish his status as sole legitimate representative of

²⁵ WATTS, pp. 228–30.

²⁶ VICKERS, pp. 288–9.

²⁷ WATTS, p. 230n.

²⁸ For detailed accounts see VICKERS, pp. 290–94; WOLFFE, pp. 129–31; GRIFFITHS, pp. 496–9.

²⁹ VICKERS, pp. 295–302; THOMAS, pp. 305–8.

Lancastrian interests beside the king.³⁰ Moreover, such a show trial would have allowed the court to present itself as guardian of law and order, whose swift action had allegedly saved king and country from imminent usurpation by Gloucester. Finally, Suffolk and his associates may have hoped that by involving the lords in parliament in a joint move against a man whose policies had never been popular with his peers, it would be possible to quell nascent magnate discontent.³¹

The duke's sudden death in custody had precisely the opposite effect. It not only compromised the government, but it also called attention to those issues which Gloucester had most determinedly fought for: strong kingship, good counsel and an unwavering policy of strength towards France. None of these were points on which Suffolk's regime could have wanted to be put to the test. Gloucester's nimbus as the last of the true Lancastrians, on the other hand, had remained intact and ready to be appropriated and exploited by the opposition to the court.³² Suffolk's junta therefore attempted frantically to counteract the effects of the duke's inopportune demise. Only hours after Gloucester had first fallen unconscious, his bastard son Arthur and several other members of the duke's *familia* had been arrested. Their trial and conviction of treason was clearly staged as a replacement of the intended proceedings against Gloucester himself, and as a posthumous justification of the government's move against the duke. A royal pardon for the alleged traitors, spectacularly pronounced after the first stage of the execution had already been carried out, was apparently intended as a demonstration of the king's magnanimity and as a proof that the proceedings against Gloucester had not been motivated by vindictiveness on the part of Henry VI.³³

Meanwhile, Suffolk and his associates tried to obliterate the duke's

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

³¹ Compare Watts's observation on the possible involvement of larger sections of the aristocracy in the destruction of Gloucester, WATTS, pp. 230–31. Watts argues that these magnates joined in Suffolk's action at their own initiative because they wanted to avoid a major public debate about foreign policy. *Pace* Watts, it is here contended that an involvement of leading magnates the projected proceedings against Gloucester may have been intended to fulfil the same integrative function as the participation of the council in the proceedings against Eleanor Cobham, see GRIFFITHS, p. 499 and above, chapter eight, pp. 100–104.

³² GRIFFITHS, p. 499.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 498; VICKERS, pp. 303–5.

role in politics by appropriating the last vestiges of his power. The distribution of Gloucester's offices, lands, and moveable property to the queen and members of the court coterie began within hours of his death. The grants of some of Gloucester's estates to King's college and the seizure of the duke's remaining books for the royal foundation at Cambridge have already been mentioned.³⁴ Queen Margaret received large sections of Gloucester's territorial possessions in the duchy of Lancaster. Suffolk took some of the duke's lands in South Wales; he succeeded him as earl of Pembroke and assumed Gloucester's office of royal chamberlain and, perhaps, his former position as Constable of Dover and Warden of the Cinque Ports.³⁵

Neither the government's attempts posthumously to besmirch Gloucester's reputation, nor the swift appropriation of his worldly goods could, however, prevent the dead duke's emergence as a symbolic representative of the mounting opposition to the court. No credence was given to the allegations of Gloucester's treasonable intentions; rumours that the duke had been killed at Suffolk's orders began to circulate immediately after his death; and the myth of "Good Duke Humphrey", who had been martyred in the fight against Suffolk's regime, was to become one of the central elements of Yorkist propaganda in the 1450s.³⁶ It may be seen as a tragic twist of fate that after Gloucester had throughout his political life unsuccessfully striven to impress his ideal of strong kingship on English politics, it was the contingency of his death that finally permitted his apotheosis as figurehead of an opposition to uncontrolled oligarchic rule.

³⁴ Above, chapter nine, pp. 114–5.

³⁵ VICKERS, pp. 302–3; WATTS, p. 230n.

³⁶ VICKERS, pp. 295–306; GRIFFITHS, p. 499, pp. 748–9; WOLFFE, p. 297; THOMAS, pp. 302–3; WATTS, pp. 228–32, p. 274, pp. 278–9, p. 319.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

This investigation has taken as its point of departure the idea that the reintegration of Gloucester's political career with his biography as a patron of letters would make it possible to establish lines of continuity in his political conduct and elucidate the specific motivation of the duke's literary patronage. The chronological reconstruction of Gloucester's activity in the spheres of culture and politics has brought to light three recurrent themes that informed his action throughout his public career.

The first of these recurrent themes was Gloucester's insistence on his special responsibility towards Henry VI. Before the boy-king's English coronation in 1429, Gloucester legitimised his claim to the custody of his nephew with reference to the deathbed provisions of Henry V. A reconsideration of the events during the eight weeks following Henry V's death suggests that in response to the crisis created by the king's demise, the rump council in England may provisionally have accepted Gloucester's commission as regent as laid down in the codicil to Henry V's testament of August 1422. Apparently, it was Bedford's rival bid to the governance of England which inadvertently raised questions about the constitutional issues involved in the establishment of a regency, and paved the way for the appointment of conciliar government.

Gloucester's memorandum of December 1422, in which he tried to defend Bedford's and his own claim to the governance of England during Henry VI's minority, was not, as has previously been suggested, a testimony to the duke's presumptuousness but a carefully balanced offer of a compromise, which foresaw the establishment of a regency with strong conciliar elements. That the lords' refusal was due to Gloucester's lack of authority, rather than to any deeply rooted aversion to a regency, is suggested by the fact that whenever Bedford was in the country, he enjoyed prerogatives that resembled those Gloucester had demanded in his memorandum.

Under the impression of the definitive refutation of his own title to the regency in 1428, and in response to Henry VI's English coronation

in the following year, Gloucester reinterpreted the *tutela* clause to imply his obligation to promote the personal rule of Henry VI and to assume for himself the role of principal advisor of his nephew. These objectives informed Gloucester's policy during his ascendancy in the aftermath of his coup of 1432, in the period after Bedford's death and the breakdown of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance in 1435, and until the mid-1440s. Only when he could no longer overlook that the puerile king was too inept to exercise his personal rule and that instead of listening to him, Henry VI preferred to rely on the advice of the members of the court clique under Suffolk's lead, did Gloucester tentatively voice his discontent with his nephew.

The second characteristic trait of Gloucester's policy from the early 1420s onwards was his implacable distrust of Henry Beaufort. It has here been proposed that this distrust was not the result of personal animosity but may have been a manifestation of a latent dynastic struggle between the Lancastrians of the full and of the half blood that flared up after the death of Henry V.

Probably misled by the outwardly harmonious, symbiotic relations between the Lancastrians and the Beauforts, Gloucester in 1424 entrusted Henry Beaufort with the protection of Henry VI before setting out to realise his territorial ambitions in Hainault. Yet, confronted with evidence for Beaufort's exploitation of his prerogative as protector, Gloucester seems, upon his return from the continent, to have arrived at the conviction that by leaving the country he had given the powerful prelate a golden opportunity to encroach upon Lancastrian interests and benefit the ambitions of his own clan. As a result, Gloucester apparently conceived his almost obsessive fear of what he perceived as Beaufort's dynastic ambitions. At the same time, the duke seems to have determined never again to neglect his obligation towards Henry VI and his own responsibility for the defence of Henry V's political legacy and the protection of Lancastrian interests. It has here been proposed that these interlocking commitments fired Gloucester's aversion towards Beaufort which became manifest in his attacks on the prelate of 1425/6, 1432, and 1439/40. Only in the early 1440s, under the influence of the cardinal's eclipse and the emergence of Suffolk's regime, did Gloucester's anxieties concerning Beaufort's political ascendancy apparently atrophy and go underground.

The third central feature of Gloucester's career was the interrelation of his action in the spheres of culture and politics. The duke's

reliance on historical evidence to document his claim to the regency in his memorandum of 1422 may have been a prelude to this theme, which found its first expression in 1425, when Gloucester commissioned Lydgate with the *Serpent of Division*, possibly as a companion-piece to his offer to Bedford of a formal compact of alliance against Beaufort. Gloucester's strategy, from spring 1428 onwards, to enforce Henry VI's personal rule at the earliest possible date, was supplemented, in November of that year, by the ratification of a new curriculum for the young king, that was far in advance of his tender age. Gloucester's coup of 1432, temporarily invested him with the necessary powers to begin with the realisation of his political ambitions for Henry VI. Concurrently, the duke commissioned Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* and Bruni's *Politics* translation, presumably as personal 'mirrors' for Henry VI intended to instruct the young king in the theory of statecraft.

Bedford's second protectorate of 1433/4 put an end to Gloucester's plans for Henry VI. Yet the elder duke's premature death in 1435, the breakdown of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance, Beaufort's loss of credibility after the diplomatic débâcle at Arras and his own popularity in response to the raid on Flanders in 1436, gave Gloucester another chance to implement his scheme. His commission of Frulovisi's *Vita Henrici Quinti* and the *Humfroidos* was neither an expression of the duke's desire for self-aggrandisement nor part of his anti-Burgundian propaganda effort; instead it reflected Gloucester's continued efforts to encourage Henry VI's independent will and recommend himself as principal counsellor to his royal nephew. As another personal 'mirror' for Henry VI, Frulovisi's *Vita* explicitly aimed to inspire the teenage king to emulate the exemplary life of his late father; meanwhile, Gloucester was presented as the faithful executor of Henry V's will. This theme was continued and reinforced in the *Humfroidos*, which celebrated the duke as defender of Henry V's continental legacy and as the loyal servant of Henry VI.

The desire to publicise his self image as executor of his late brother's will may also have determined Gloucester's decision, in response to an appeal of the university for his help in the recovery of Henry V's books, actively to engage in the patronage of Oxford. A further motive for Gloucester's first major donation to Oxford in November 1439 may have been the duke's wish, at the morrow of a parliament he had called to convene in that town, to win the backing of the commons for another attack on cardinal Beaufort.

The pose which Gloucester adopted in this final struggle with Beaufort may have been inspired by the sophisticated adaptations of original texts by Poggio Bracciolini which Piero da Monte, the papal collector in England, undertook for the duke in the late 1430s. Thus the celebration of Scipio's courageous defence in the senate of Roman civic liberties against Caesar's seizure of power, in da Monte's rendering of Poggio's contribution to the Scipio/Caesar controversy, may have provided the duke with a role model for his self-fashioning as defender of the royal prerogative against its alleged erosion by Beaufort, which Gloucester expressed in his *Declaracone* before parliament of February 1440.

The duke's attack on him inaugurated Beaufort's gradual retirement from politics; yet Gloucester could not profit from his rival's eclipse because the gap left by the cardinal was immediately filled by the earl of Suffolk. It has here been proposed that the trial against his wife, Eleanor Cobham, did not end Gloucester's career in politics, but made him a pawn in the hands of Suffolk's nascent court oligarchy, which depended on the duke as heir apparent and self-appointed standard bearer of Lancastrian interests to lend its own decisions an air of legitimacy and continuity. This may explain, why, in the aftermath of his wife's disgrace, Gloucester's action in the spheres of politics and culture oscillated between muted resistance to and unwilling collaboration with Suffolk's regime. Thus Antonio Beccaria's orations of 1444 in favour of the Angevin alliance are exemplary of the way in which the duke instrumentalised the rhetorical abilities of his humanist "poeta et orator" in favour of government decisions that almost certainly did not enjoy his full support. Gloucester's atypical silence in the council deliberations of 1442/3 concerning the French expedition of John Beaufort of 1443, on the other hand, and the duke's abstention from participation in the royal foundations of Eton and King's College, Cambridge, may have been guided by his determination not to be co-opted by the court coterie.

The same tacit resistance seems to have informed Gloucester's perseverance in his independent patronage of Oxford that found its expression in his donation to the university of February 1444. Benefiting mainly the faculties of arts and law, the 1444 donation was clearly intended as a complement to the duke's first gift of 1439, and indicates that Gloucester had planned to patronise all faculties of the university in equal measure. In 1444, the principal motivation for the duke's patronage of Oxford was no longer his desire to emulate

Henry V, nor his ambition to win popular support. The comparison with the duke's contemporary investment in his chantry tomb at St Albans suggests, rather, that Gloucester's continued support of the university was informed by his wish, at the end of his career in politics and under the constant threat to his life that emanated from the *camarilla* about Henry VI, to provide for the salvation of his soul, and to create a monument to his own worldly glory.

The same desire which had been implicit in Gloucester's 1444 donation to Oxford, to reassert at least a modicum of intellectual independence after more than two decades of unquestioning subservience to Henry VI, may have found open expression in the duke's gift of a book to Alfonso of Aragon of July 1445. At a time, when Henry VI's government was deeply engaged in negotiations over an alliance with the Angevins, Gloucester's present of a manuscript from the French royal library to the principal enemy of René of Anjou, could be read as a criticism of the Angevin alliance and the French policy of Suffolk's regime.

Moreover, Gloucester's praise of Alfonso's unequalled qualities as a strong king, whom the duke wished to give his full support, could be interpreted as an indication that disappointed by Henry VI's ineptness and embittered by the king's failure to live up to the model of his heroic father, Gloucester had renounced his loyalty to Henry VI and was prepared to lend his voice as self-appointed torch-bearer of Lancastrian destiny to more worthy inheritors of the spiritual and political legacy of Henry V.

Almost certainly Gloucester's present to Alfonso had been no more than an ill-considered act of rhetorical bravado and an attempt to compensate for his very real political impotence. Yet in the politically charged atmosphere of the summer of 1445, the duke's last known act of literary patronage may have caused sufficient alarm to tip the fragile equilibrium of mutual dependence and mistrust that had characterised the relations between Gloucester and Suffolk's regime since the Cobham trial. His gift to Alfonso may, therefore, have been the catalyst for the government strike against Gloucester during the reception of the French embassy on 15 July. The ensuing eighteen months saw the duke's long drawn out slip into political ignominy that found its end in his death in government custody in February 1447.

The dynamic interrelation between his action in the spheres of culture and politics thus outlasted Gloucester's enmity of Beaufort and continued to characterise his action even when the duke, in the

mid-1440s, apparently began tentatively to renounce his unconditional support of Henry VI that had been his *raison d'être* since the early 1420s. Therefore, it is here proposed that the integrative perception of politics and culture was the leitmotif of Gloucester's biography.

An analysis which considers the duke's literary patronage and his political career not as mutually exclusive aspects of his action, but as a continuum, demonstrates that although Gloucester's political career was marred by serious misapprehensions of the political situation and of his own position within the existing power structures, it was not, as has hitherto been argued, erratic and dictated by intensely personal ambitions. The evolution of the duke's self-image from regent and custodian of his infant nephew, to promoter of Henry VI's personal rule and principal counsellor of the young king, and, finally, to self-appointed, independent representative of Lancastrian destiny, and the parallel emergence of the duke's apprehension of the dynastic ambitions of the Beauforts, show a high degree of consistency and demonstrate that Gloucester's action was not idiosyncratic, but informed by the same political and dynastic objectives which historians have identified as the driving forces of public action during the fifteenth century. The duke's emphasis on strong kingship is manifest in his advocacy of a regency instead of conciliar government and in his attempts to inaugurate Henry VI's personal rule. The importance Gloucester accorded to consultation as a part of policy-making is testified by his efforts to recommend himself as principal advisor to Henry VI and his repeated offers of cooperation with the lords and parliament. Finally, the duke's recourse to political theory for the formulation of his own policy is apparent in his commission of advice books for Henry VI and in his self-fashioning on the model of politicians from Roman antiquity. These features reveal that for all his opposition to the dominant consensus, Gloucester was not an eccentric figure; instead his perception of politics was determined by the same principles that, according to Watts, dictated the policy of the members of Henry VI's various conciliar governments which Gloucester so steadfastly denounced.

Meanwhile, the duke's parallel patronage of English and Italian authors, and his donations of traditional scholastic texts alongside recent humanist publications, suggest that the duke's interest in Italian humanism was not primarily motivated by aesthetic considerations or by an enlightened desire to promote the *studia humanitatis* in England but by Gloucester's concern to obtain for himself those texts as were best suited to his needs. The duke's enthusiasm for the humanist

project may have originated in his interest in political theory, his search for historical role models and his desire to go *ad fontes*, that is apparent in his recourse to historical evidence in the memorandum of 1422 and in his decision to provide Henry VI with the original text of Aristotle's *Politics* rather than its derivatives.

The duke's choice of works that he considered best suited to his requirements, his selection of specific translators, and his precise instructions concerning the form and content of the works he commissioned, contradict the established idea of Gloucester as a vain-glorious dilettante who lacked a deeper understanding of the texts that were produced at his command. Instead the duke appears as a discerning connoisseur, who was able freely to combine the productions of the Italian avantgarde with the most advanced works of French and English authors, and whose acquisition of humanist texts for Oxford was apparently guided by the concern to provide the faculty of arts with the most advanced teaching materials available on the international market.

Gloucester's literary patronage was not motivated by a somewhat diffuse desire for self-aggrandisement; instead it interlocked in complex and highly specific ways with his objective to defend the Lancastrian claim to the throne, his wish to inaugurate Henry VI's personal rule, and his ambition to recommend himself as advisor to the king. Still, his patronage was not propagandistic. Gloucester did not one-directionally instrumentalise literature to bring about his political aims; instead his commission of advice manuals on statecraft, his patronage of Oxford, and his recourse to historical models for the formulation of his own role in English politics testify to the duke's belief in the immediate relevance of historical precedent and theoretical knowledge for the formulation of policy.

This pragmatic approach to literature and history was, according to Green and Watts, typical of the attitude of members of the political class in fifteenth century England. It is here proposed that this pragmatic understanding of literature constituted an analogy to the Italian humanists' celebration of literary competence and historical knowledge as an integral element of the *vita activa*. This analogy may have paved the way for the reception of Italian humanism in England; almost certainly it provided the common ground on which Gloucester met the Italian middlemen, Zanone da Castiglione and Piero da Monte, whose activity as brokers of contacts between the duke and the Italian humanist community is treated in the following section.

PART TWO

PAWNS OR PLAYERS? ZANONE DA CASTIGLIONE AND
PIERO DA MONTE AS MIDDLEMEN BETWEEN
HUMPHREY, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER AND THE
ITALIAN HUMANIST COMMUNITY

CHAPTER TWELVE

INTRODUCTION

Italian contacts with England in the fifteenth century were mostly limited to trade and, to a lesser degree, to banking, and in the eyes of early Quattrocento Italians England lay at the margins—or even beyond—of the confines of the civilised world. How then, did Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, who never went to Italy in person, establish his contacts with Italian humanists? The evidence of his correspondence reveals that except for his connection with Leonardo Bruni, whom he seems to have approached directly, Gloucester initiated his relations with the Italian literary community through the agency of three known middlemen: Piero da Monte, Zanone da Castiglione, and Rolando Talenti. During the last quarter of the 1430s, these mediators were instrumental in linking the English patron with clients in the Italian humanist community, such as Tito Livio Frulovisi, Lapo da Castiglionchio, and Pier Candido Decembrio. Concurrently, these middlemen held important functions in Anglo-Papal politics: da Monte officiated as papal collector and nuncio in England between 1435 and 1440; Zanone da Castiglione was bishop of Bayeux in Lancastrian Normandy; and Zanone's secretary, Rolando Talenti, was apparently closely involved in the formulation of his master's policy in northern France.¹ Hitherto, the political careers of these middlemen have not been linked with their literary brokerage on Gloucester's behalf. The latter has either been accepted as a self-explanatory event in a natural process of cultural advancement, or it has been presented as the disinterested action of enlightened Italians, who put their connections with the humanist community at Gloucester's disposal in order to bring the Italian Renaissance to medieval England. By contrast to these established notions, and in accordance with the approach that has been employed in the first section of this study, the following investigation aims to integrate the literary brokerage of Gloucester's middlemen with their political biography to create a

¹ SCHIRMER, pp. 22–7, pp. 37–41. WEISS, pp. 24–8, pp. 49–53; SAMMUT, pp. 15–28.

basis for a critical reassessment of their role as mediators between the English duke and the Italian humanist community.

Despite the recent burgeoning of patronage-studies in Renaissance scholarship, the function of middlemen in patron-client relations has yet largely failed to attract the attention of historians.² Sociologists and anthropologists of complex societies have, however, proposed some preliminary definitions of brokerage that may prove helpful for the understanding of the action of Gloucester's literary mediators. According to these definitions, brokers are agents who actively assume control of the flow of information, or other resources, between individuals who are otherwise connected only by indirect links.³ The broker can either act as patron-broker or broker-client, or he can play both roles at the same time.⁴ The emergence of brokerage typically accompanies processes of modernisation or the constitution of states, for brokers act as a link between the centre and the localities or between differing value systems.⁵ Thus they occupy both a central position between the structures among which they act as mediators and a peripheral position within each of these structures.⁶ When exchanges between unconnected principals are mediated the flow of resources is typically directed toward central actors and away from peripheral ones; consequently the success of a broker depends

² A typical feature of complex patron-client networks, brokerage tends to be subsumed under the general heading of patronage, e.g., MOLHO, A., 'Cosimo de' Medici: *Pater Patriae* or *Padrino?*', *Stanford Italian Review*, i (1979), 5-39, at pp. 29-31; KENT, F.W., 'Patron-Client Networks in Renaissance Florence and the Emergence of Lorenzo as *Maestro della Bottega*', in TOSCANI, B. (ed.), *Lorenzo de' Medici. New Perspectives* (New York and San Francisco, 1994), pp. 279-313, at pp. 284-6; id., 'Un *Paradiso Habitato da Diavoli* Ties of Loyalty and Patronage in the Society of Medicean Florence', in BENVENUTI, A./CARDINI, F./GIANNARELLI, E. (eds.), *Le radici cristiane di Firenze* (Florence, 1994), pp. 183-210, at pp. 194-200. To date, the only studies in the field of Renaissance and early modern history that are explicitly concerned with the problem of brokerage are KETTERING, S., *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York and Oxford, 1986); id., 'Brokerage at the Court of Louis XIV', *Historical Journal*, xxxvi (1993), 69-87.

³ BLOK, A., 'Variations in Patronage', *Sociologische Gids*, xvi (1969), 365-78, at p. 369; BURKOLTER, V., *The Patronage System. Theoretical Remarks, Social Strategies. Monographien zur Soziologie und Gesellschaftspolitik*, iv (1976), p. 22; MARSDEN, P.V., 'Brokerage Behavior in Restricted Exchange Networks', MARSDEN, P.V./LIN, N. (eds.), *Social Structure and Network Analysis* (Beverly Hills, 1982), pp. 201-18, at p. 206; KETTERING, p. 4.

⁴ Ibid.; BLOK, p. 370.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 369-70; BURKOLTER, p. 22; KETTERING, pp. 40-62.

⁶ BLOK, p. 370; BURKOLTER, p. 22.

on his ability to emphasise his own centrality and suppress the aspects of his marginality.⁷ By contrast to patrons, brokers do not dispense first-order resources, such as land, funds, jobs or specialised knowledge; instead, they give access to persons who have a monopoly over the distribution of these first order resources.⁸ Accordingly, bonds between brokers and clients are less dominated by affection and less durable than relations between patrons and clients. This generates an open system of broker-client relations in which alliances are constantly formed and reformed, and diffuse patterns of personal exchange are replaced by determinable, utilitarian, and circumscribed transactions.⁹ In return for their services, brokers claim a commission; this can consist either in a share of their clients' first order resources such as property, better employment or political office and/or in a further enhancement of their status as middlemen.¹⁰ Brokers never rise to their position by chance; their emergence is always the result of persistent efforts to assume and consolidate that role.¹¹

The application of this definition of brokerage to the careers of Gloucester's literary mediators raises several questions: What position did these men hold before their emergence as middlemen? What were their relations with Gloucester and with the Italian humanists? What steps did they undertake to launch themselves as the duke's cultural brokers? What commission did they hope to accrue from their brokerage? How successful were they in obtaining this commission? Finally, what was the significance of their activity for the transmission of Italian Renaissance humanism to England?

The exploration of these question first permits the identification of the specific motives that encouraged Zanone di Castiglione and Piero da Monte to style themselves as a middlemen between Gloucester and the Italian humanists; second, it points to the common interests that were at the basis of the contacts between Gloucester and his middlemen; and third, the reconstruction of the respective careers of these middlemen will highlight the significance of such go-betweens

⁷ MARSDEN, p. 207, pp. 215–6.

⁸ Ibid.; BOISSEVAIN, J., *Friends of Friends. Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (Oxford, 1974), p. 161.

⁹ BURKOLTER, pp. 22–3; KETTERING, p. 59.

¹⁰ BURKOLTER, p. 23; GOULD, R.V./FERNANDEZ, R.M., 'Structures of Mediation: A Formal Approach to Brokerage in Transaction Networks', *Social Methodology* xix (1989), 89–126, at p. 91.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 104; KETTERING, p. 4, p. 59.

in the transmission of Italian Renaissance humanism to England during the first half of the Quattrocento.

The examination is based on humanist epistolaries and dedication letters and archival data from northern France and the Vatican. Lack of sources has rendered it impossible to discuss in detail the role of Rolando Talenti as a broker of contacts between Gloucester and the Milanese humanist Pier Candido Decembrio. A trained jurist from Lombardy, Rolando Talenti and his brother Antonio lived in northern France for over thirty years during a period in which this region witnessed serious political upheavals; as canons of Bayeux, the brothers were involved in moneylending activities in the town and one of them apparently had an illegitimate son by a local woman.¹² None of this is ever mentioned in Talenti's voluminous collection of letters and orations, which has survived in Bayeux.¹³ A formulary rather than an epistolary, this compilation seems to have been intended by Talenti as a monument to his own ability, even after decades of cultural deprivation at his outpost in war-ridden Normandy, to compose model orations and write model letters on model occasions. Behind the Ciceronian diction and humanist flourish of his epistles, Talenti, the man, remains elusive. The archival evidence from Bayeux is too fragmented to reconstruct the secretary's career in Normandy, and attempts to trace Talenti's roots in Lombardy have been unavailing. Therefore, what little can be said about his role of mediator between Gloucester and Pier Candido Decembrio is summarised in the discussion of Decembrio's relations with Gloucester in the final section of this book.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the present investigation focuses exclusively on a comparative analysis of the careers of Zanone da Castiglione and Piero da Monte as Gloucester's cultural brokers.

The discussion takes as its point of departure the contention that the activity of Castiglione and da Monte as Gloucester's cultural brokers was immediately connected with their assignment as mediators

¹² LAFFETAY, J., 'Notice sur la vie et les écrits de Roland des Talents, Chanoine de Bayeux', *Bulletin de la Société d'Agriculture, Sciences, Arts et Belles Lettres de Bayeux* (Paris, 1858), pp. 13–57; FOFFANO, T., 'Umanisti Italiani in Normandia nel Secolo XV', *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser., iv (1964), 3–40, at p. 9; Archives Départementales du Calvados (ADC), MS 204/I (fragmented cartulary from Bayeux, 1462).

¹³ Bayeux, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 5 (henceforth cited as TALENTI, 'Epistolary'). For a description of this codex see FOFFANO, pp. 22–5.

¹⁴ Below, Part Three, chapter eighteen, pp. 223–6.

in Anglo-Papal relations. Well connected with the humanist community, aware of Gloucester's interest in classical texts, and sharing his pragmatic approach to literature, these diplomats supplied the duke with books and literary contacts in order to secure his favours and services as an important representative of Henry VI's government and thus to promote their objectives in politics. The aim of this study is threefold. First, the integrative analysis of their public careers and cultural brokerage undertakes to set Zanone da Castiglione and Piero da Monte into relief as independent agents with clearly defined objectives and individual ambitions. Second, it ventures to relate the activity of these middlemen on behalf of Gloucester to the reinterpretation of the duke's role as literary patron and man of politics that has been proposed in the first section of this study. Third, as a case study, it hopes to draw attention to the pivotal role brokers played in the transmission of Italian Renaissance humanism from Italy to northern Europe.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A FAMILY OPERATION. ZANONE DA CASTIGLIONE, BISHOP OF BAYEUX 1432–1459, AND HIS ROLE AS MEDIATOR OF CONTACTS BETWEEN GLOUCESTER AND ITALIAN HUMANISTS

Some time in 1437, Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, requested Zanone da Castiglione, the bishop of Bayeux, who was then in his native Italy, to supply him with the latest publications of prominent humanists.¹ In the following months, the bishop encouraged several authors to send their works to the English duke. Lapo da Castiglionchio and Antonio Pacini offered samples of their writings to Gloucester; meanwhile, Pier Candido Decembrio relied on the mediation of Zanone and his secretary, Rolando Talenti, to establish a connection with the duke that eventually led to Decembrio's employment as Gloucester's literary agent in Italy between 1439 and 1442.² Yet the bishop not only brokered cultural contacts between Gloucester and the Italian humanist community, but he was also the main representative of the interests of the Castiglione family in Lancastrian Normandy: interests that had first been established during the 1420s by Zanone's powerful uncle, Cardinal Branda da Castiglione. Links between Zanone's political interests in Normandy and his activity as Gloucester's literary agent have been intimated by Walter Schirmer.³ The precise nature of these links, however, has hitherto not been explored; instead Zanone's brokerage between 'Renaissance' Italy and 'medieval' England has unquestioningly been presented as a self-explanatory manifestation of an all-encompassing process of cultural modernisation.⁴ By contrast to this established account, and in accordance with the integrative approach employed in the investigation of Gloucester's literary patronage and political action, the following study focuses on a

¹ DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', f. 31v, cited above, Part One, chapter nine, p. 109n.

² VICKERS, pp. 351–6; WEISS, pp. 49–62; SCHIRMER, pp. 22–7; FOFFANO, 'Umanisti Italiani', *passim*; SAMMUT, pp. 23–53. Decembrio's relations with Gloucester are discussed below, Part Three, chapter eighteen, pp. 222–32.

³ SCHIRMER, pp. 23–4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 22–5; WEISS, pp. 40–41, pp. 49–50.

reconstruction of the intricate network linking England, Lancastrian Normandy and the Curia, that formed the context for Zanone's activity as a middleman between the English duke and the humanist community. The analysis departs from the assumption that Zanone's emergence as Gloucester's middleman in the autumn and winter of 1437 was immediately linked with the bishop's political objective, during this period, of protecting the dynastic interests of his family in Lancastrian Normandy. The central question concerns the advantages Zanone accrued from his role of cultural mediator between Italy and England.

The Castiglione of Castiglione Olona, near Varese, can be traced back to the eleventh century. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the family rose from the Lombard nobility into the ranks of the urban aristocracy of Milan. Retaining their roots in the *condado*, many members of the clan now obtained academic degrees and assumed leading positions in the Visconti government.⁵ It was Branda da Castiglione (c. 1350–1443), however, who first established his family in the arena of international politics.⁶ A *doctor in utriusque*, Branda was already in his late thirties when he was called to the Curia in 1389; yet once he had arrived in Rome, his progress was unstoppable. Bishop of Piacenza in 1404, he was promoted to consistory as cardinal of S. Clemente in 1411. By that time Branda had found his true calling as a diplomat. Between 1410 and 1414 he served as papal legate at the court of king Sigismund in Hungary. The ensuing decade saw Branda's rise as leading papal representative in Germany and central Europe. An important participant at the Council of Constance, the cardinal, in the early 1430s, closely collaborated with Sigismund in shaping the imperial position at the Council of Basel,

⁵ LITTA, P., *Famiglie Celebri Italiani* (13 vols., Milan, 1819–74), iii, s.v. 'Castiglioni di Milano'.

⁶ The following biographical sketch is based on GIRGENSOHN, D., 'di Castiglione, Branda', *DBI*, xxii (Rome, 1979), 69–75; MOLS, R., 'Castiglione, Branda di', *DHGE*, xi (Paris, 1949), 1434–44; SOLDI-RONDININI, G., 'Branda Castiglioni nella Lombardia del suo tempo', *Nuova Rivista Storica*, lxx (1986), 147–58; FOFFANO, T., 'Breve nota sull'epistolario di Branda di Castiglione con due lettere inedite', *Aevum*, lii (1988), 302–9; id., 'Un carteggio del cardinale Branda di Castiglione con Cosimo de Medici', in AVESANI, R./FERRARI, M./FOFFANO, T. (eds.), *Vestigia: Studi in Onore di Giuseppe Billanovich* (2 vols., Rome, 1984), i, 296–314.; id., 'Tra Costanza e Basilea. Rapporti col mondo d'oltralpe del card. Branda Castiglioni, legato pontificio e mecenate della cultura', in IJSEWIJN, J./VERBEKE, G. (eds.), *The Late Middle Ages and the Dawn of Humanism Outside Italy* (Louvain, 1972), pp. 19–30; id., 'La costruzione di Castiglione Olona in un opuscolo inedito di Francesco Pizolpasso', *IMU*, iii (1960), 154–87.

over which he himself presided in 1433. Ultimately, however, Branda remained a supporter of papal supremacy; in the late summer of 1434 he therefore withdrew from Basel. Four years later, the octogenarian cardinal attended the Council of Ferrara/Florence before retiring to his ancestral home at Castiglione Olona, where he died in February 1443.

His reputation as a skilled negotiator recommended Branda as a contact person at the papal court to the rulers he met during his diplomatic assignments. The cardinal promoted the interests at the Curia of the Dominicans, the Order of St John, the duke of Milan, the Medici, Emperor Sigismund, the kings of Portugal, Aragon, Poland and Austria, and, most important in the context of the present investigation, the English government.⁷ Although the influence of cardinal protectors on papal politics is supposed to have been pervasive during this period, the known evidence for Branda's activity on behalf of the English government has hitherto been considered too fragmented to allow for more than speculative assessments of his role in Anglo-Papal relations.⁸

⁷ BONDIOLI, P. 'La ricognizione della salma del cardinale Branda di Castiglioni e la scoperta d'una sua biografia', *Aevum*, ix (1935), 474–9, at p. 476. GIRGENSOHN, p. 73; MOLS, 1438; FOFFANO, 'Un carteggio', pp. 298–9 and JOANNIDES, P., *Masaccio and Masolino. A Complete Catalogue* (London, 1993), p. 314; STRNAD, A.A., 'Aus der Frühzeit des nationalen Protektorats der Kardinäle', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung*, l (1964), 264–71, at p. 271.

⁸ On the role of the cardinal protectors see WODKA, J., *Zur Geschichte der nationalen Protektorate der Kardinäle an der römischen Kurie*, Publikationen des ehemaligen Österreichischen Historischen Instituts in Rom, iv (Innsbruck and Leipzig, 1938), at p. 4, p. 34. See also J. VINCKE's review of WODKA's work, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung*, xxviii (1939), 516–20; STRNAD 'Frühzeit'; id., 'Konstanz und der Plan eines deutschen "Nationalkardinals"'. Neue Dokumente zur Kirchenpolitik König Siegmunds von Luxemburg', in FRANZEN, A./MÜLLER, W. (eds.), *Das Konzil von Konstanz. Beiträge zu seiner Geschichte und Theologie. Festschrift für H. Schäufele* (Freiburg, 1964), pp. 397–428; GIRGENSOHN, D., 'Wie wird man Kardinal? Kuriale und außerkuriale Karrieren an der Wende des 14. zum 15. Jahrhunderts', *QFIAB*, lvii (1977), 138–62, at pp. 145–6 and ILARDI, V., 'Crosses and Carets: Renaissance Patronage and Coded Letters of Recommendation', *AHR*, xcii, 2 (1987), pp. 1127–49.

Branda's earliest contacts with England dated back to the Council of Constance, where his engagement in the suppression of the Hussites and his key-position in papal-imperial diplomacy brought him into close contact with the head of the English delegation, Henry Beaufort, HARVEY, M., 'Martin V and Henry V', *AHP*, xxiv (1986), 49–70, at p. 62; FOFFANO, 'Umanisti Italiani', pp. 31–2, MOLS, p. 1437. Shortly afterwards, Branda seems to have been involved in the negotiations over the treaty of Troyes, *ibid.*; HERVAL, R., 'Trois grands évêques Italiens en Normandie au XV^e siècle', *Études Normandes*, xxxii, 3 (1959), 185–95, at p. 186; ALLMAND, C.T., 'The Relations between the English Government, the Higher Clergy, and the Papacy

Yet previously unnoticed evidence in the Vatican Archive points to Branda's continuous involvement in Anglo-Papal relations from 1418 until his death in 1443, and suggests that during this period, the cardinal had almost complete control of the flow of information between England and Rome. This evidence is contained in the Vatican Registers, the most important set of sources for the study of papal diplomacy. Focusing exclusively on the content of the political correspondence recorded in these registers, historians have hitherto failed to consider the men who were responsible for the drafting and execution of the bulls and briefs documented in the *Registri Vaticani*: the apostolic secretaries. Charged with the execution of the politically most sensitive correspondence of the papacy, the secretaries received their directives directly from the pope. They worked independently of the papal chancery and usually dispatched their bulls and briefs without further consultation with other curial offices. The secretaries had thus both access to classified information and immediate influence on the formulation of important documents in papal foreign policy.⁹ This made them highly interesting contact persons

in Normandy, 1417–1450' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil.-thesis, 1963), p. 222–3. In the mid-1420s, he investigated, on behalf of the English, the legal implications of that treaty, HARVEY, M., *England, Rome and the Papacy 1417–1464* (Manchester, 1993) (unless otherwise indicated, all further citations from HARVEY refer to this work), p. 142. Some ten years later, Branda promoted the foundation of the university of Caen in Lancastrian Normandy at the Curia; in the early 1440s Suffolk's regime granted him an annuity for his support of the royal foundations at Eton and Cambridge, *ibid.*, p. 121; DE BOUARD, M., 'Quelques données nouvelles sur la création de l'Université de Caen,' *Le Moyen Age*, lxi (1963), 727–41; ALLMAND, *Lancastrian Normandy*, pp. 105–21. For tentative assessments of Branda's importance in Anglo-Papal diplomacy see ZELFELDER, A., *England und das Basler Konzil*, Historische Studien, cxiii (Berlin, 1913), 128; FERGUSON, p. 138; HARVEY, *passim*.

⁹ For detailed discussions of the function of the secretaries and their competencies see OTTENTHAL, E.v., 'Die Bullenregister Martins V. und Eugens IV.', *MIÖG*, Ergänzungsband, i (1885), 401–589, at pp. 461–84; BRESSLAU, H., *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien* (2 vols. Leipzig, 1889, 1912), i, 311–2; RICHARD, P., 'Origines et Développement de la Secrétaire d'État Apostolique (1417–1823)', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, xi (1910), 56–72; HOFMANN, W.v., *Forschungen zur Geschichte der kurialen Behörden vom Schisma bis zur Reformation*, Bibliothek des königlich preussischen historischen Instituts in Rom, xii (2 vols., Rome, 1914), i, 142–57; KRAUS, A., 'Secretarius und Sekretariat. Der Ursprung der Institution des Staatssekretariats und ihr Einfluß auf die Entwicklung moderner Regierungsformen', *Römische Quartalschrift*, lv (1960), 43–84; PIRZ, E., *Supplikensignatur und Briefexpedition an der Römischen Kurie im Pontifikat Papst Calixts III.*, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, xlii (Tübingen, 1972), 219–236; FRENZ, T., 'Das Eindringen humanistischer Schriftformen in die Urkunden und Akten der päpstlichen Kurie im 15. Jahrhundert', *AD*, xix (1973), 256–418, at pp. 319–33.

for cardinal protectors like Branda da Castiglione; therefore it is not surprising that during the pontificates of Martin V and Eugenius IV, three of the six (later four) most senior members of the papal secretariat were closely connected with Branda and were almost certainly his clients. Antonio Loschi, papal secretary between 1417 and 1441, was the son of the cardinal's auditor.¹⁰ Poggio Bracciolini, a member of the secretariat from 1423 to 1453, had made Branda's acquaintance at the latest at the Council of Constance; some forty years later, he still acknowledged his indebtedness to the cardinal, "who had always loved him as if he [Poggio] had been his son".¹¹ Andrea da Florentia, who joined the secretarial team in 1431 and remained active until his death in 1452, apparently passed under Branda's protection in 1425 after he had dedicated a historical treatise to the prelate.¹²

The day-to-day work of these men and their colleagues in the papal secretariat can be reconstructed from their personal registers in which the secretaries were required for future reference to record copies of the original documents they had issued.¹³ A quantitative analysis of the surviving registers which correlates the share of each secretary in the correspondence of the papal secretariat regarding England with his stake in the correspondence with countries other than England and with his contribution to the total output of the secretariat brings to light an interesting pattern: whereas the contribution of Poggio, da Florentia, Roverella, Biondo and Loschi to the correspondence of the secretariat concerning countries other than England differed only minimally from their respective quotas in the total turnout of the secretariat (Appendix I, diagrams 1 and 2), the share of Branda da Castiglione's clients Loschi and Poggio in

¹⁰ Paris, Archives Nationales, LL4a (secretarial register of Antonio Loschi), f. 102v. On Loschi's secretarial activity see GUALDO, G., 'Antonio Loschi, segretario apostolico (1406-1436)', *ASI*, cxlvii (1989), 749-69; id., 'Umanesimo e segretari apostolici all'inizio del Quattrocento. Alcuni casi esemplari', in id. (ed.), *Cancellaria e Cultura nel Medio Evo* (Vatican City, 1990), pp. 309-14.

¹¹ BRACCIOLINI, P., *Lettere*, ed. H. HARTH (3 vols., Florence, 1984-7), iii, 420 (to Giovanni Castiglione, January 1457), "Fui, sicut nosti, cultor atque observator prestantissimi quondam atque omni laude dignissimi viri patruī tui cardinalis Placentini, qui me semper ut filium dilexit"; SABBADINI, R., *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne' secoli XIV e XV* (2 vols., Florence, 1905-14), i, 79n, 205; WALSER, E., *Poggius Florentinus. Leben und Werke* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1914), p. 76, pp. 136-7.

¹² FOFFANO, 'Un carteggio', 299n; MERCATI, A., 'Andreas de Florentia, Segretario Apostolico', *Ultimi contributi alla storia degli umanisti*, fasc. i, *Traversiana*, Studi e Testi, xc (1939), 97-133, at pp. 100-1.

¹³ See below, introduction to Appendix I.

the correspondence relating to England was respectively nine and fourteen percent higher than their contribution to the total turnout of the secretariat (Appendix I, diagrams 1 and 3).¹⁴ The share of Branda's third client, Andrea da Florentia, in the secretariat's English correspondence lay eleven per cent below his stake in the total output (*ibid.*); yet da Florentia still executed between ten and thirteen percent more of the secretariat's correspondence with England than his colleagues Roverella and Biondo, who seem not to have been connected with Branda (Appendix I, diagram 3). Together, Branda's clients executed eighty-five percent of the papacy's most important diplomatic correspondence with England during the pontificates of Martin V and Eugenius IV (*ibid.*).

This suggests that from 1418 until his death in 1443, Branda da Castiglione had constant access to and pervasive control of the flow of information between the Curia and the English government. Together with the known instances of Branda's active engagement on behalf of the English, the evidence from the papal secretariat explains Henry VI's praise of the cardinal as a most constant and loyal promoter of English interests at the papal court and suggests that Branda may have been the most influential broker of contacts between Rome and England during the second quarter of the fifteenth century.¹⁵

For the understanding of the precise nature of Branda's activity as a mediator in Anglo-Papal relations it is necessary to identify his principal contact persons in the changing conciliar coalitions that during this period governed the realm in the absence of a strong king at the centre. Only then will it become possible to assess the significance of the emergence, in 1437, of Branda's nephew Zanone as a mediator between the duke of Gloucester and the humanist community in Italy. Direct testimonies to contacts between Branda and individual representatives of Henry VI's conciliar governments are scanty; the relations of the cardinal with leading members of the English council therefore need to be reconstructed from the indirect evidence in the reports that papal diplomats sent from England to the Curia in the 1420s and 1430s. In these records Henry Beaufort and John, duke of Bedford are generally portrayed as highly sympathetic to the papal cause; Humphrey, duke of Gloucester and archbishop Chichele, on the other hand, are almost invariably presented

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ BEKYNTON, i, 163.

as staunch antipapalists with pro-conciliar leanings.¹⁶ Hitherto, these dispatches have been read as accurate analyses of the position of leading members of the English government to the Papacy; inconsistencies between the reports of the papal emissaries and other sources have been attributed to unintentional misinterpretations of the English situation by the respective diplomats.¹⁷

A look at the careers of these diplomats reveals, however, that either during their stay in England or immediately thereafter, a significant number of them received benefices that seem to have been controlled by Branda da Castiglione.¹⁸ Branda was not the only protector of these men: notwithstanding the notorious difficulties for foreigners to obtain benefices in England, three of the four papal collectors, who were active in the realm under Martin V and Eugenius IV, held a plurality of lucrative English prebends that fell under the right of provision of Cardinal Beaufort and his political allies in con-

¹⁶ HALLER, J., 'England und Rom unter Martin V.', *QFIAB*, viii (1905), 249–304, at pp. 263–5, pp. 270–90, pp. 299–301; FINK, K.A., 'Die politische Korrespondenz Martins V. nach den Brevenregistern', *QFIAB*, xxvii (1935/36), 172–244, nos. 190–1, no. 212, nos. 218–9; DAVIES, R.G., *passim*.

¹⁷ HALLER, pp. 273–8; HARRISS, p. 155; HARVEY, p. 141, p. 144. FERGUSON, pp. 125–7 noted that some of the dispatches that were sent to Rome may have been wilful misrepresentations, but he abstained from speculating on their underlying motivation.

¹⁸ The papal collectors in England Simone da Teramo (collector from 1420 to 1425) and Giovanni Obizzi (collector from 1425 to 1435, again from 1445 to 1450) received prebends in Liège and Breslau that were either previously or subsequently held by *familiars* of Cardinal Branda, BRANDMÜLLER, W., 'Simon de Lellis da Teramo. Ein Konsistorialadvokat auf den Konzilien von Konstanz und Basel', *AHC*, xii (1980), 229–68, at p. 244n.; *Repertorium Germanicum. Verzeichnis der in den Registern und Kameralakten Martins V. vorkommenden Personen, Kirchen und Orte des deutschen Reiches, seiner Diözesen und Territorien, 1417–1431* (4 vols., Berlin, 1943–79), iv, 1608–10, 2213. Obizzi's successor, Giovanni da Castiglione (collector from 1440 to 1442), was Branda's great-nephew, PETRUCCI, F., 'Castiglioni, Giovanni', *DBI*, xxii (Rome, 1979), 156–8; MOLS, R., 'Castiglione, Giovanni di', *DHGE*, xi (Paris, 1949), 1446–7. Giuliano Cesarini and Iacopo Ugolino, who were dispatched to England in the mid-1420s, were *familiars* of the cardinal, SCHWARZ, B., '*Abbreviature officium est assistere vicecancellario in expeditione litterarum apostolicarum*. Zur Entwicklung des Abbreviatorenamtes vom grossen Schisma bis zur Gründung des Vakabilistenkollegs der Abbreviatoren durch Pius II.', in GATZ, E. (ed.), *Römische Kurie. Kirchliche Finanzen. Vatikanisches Archiv. Studien zu Ehren von Hermann Hoberg* (2 vols., Rome, 1979), ii, 789–823, at p. 819 and below, p. 153. Heinrich Ehrenfels and Petrus de Mera, who were sent to England as special envoys in 1419 and 1432 respectively, HARVEY, p. 132, p. 153, were *familiars* of Branda, *Repertorium Germanicum. Eugen IV.* (forthcoming), s.v., 'Branda de Castilliono', 'Petrus de Mera'. I would like to thank Dr. Christoph Schöner at the German Historical Institute in Rome for generously giving me access to this data prior to publication.

vocation.¹⁹ This suggests that the majority of papal diplomats who came to England between 1420 and 1440 were clients both of Branda da Castiglione and Henry Beaufort. Consequently, their dispatches to Rome can no longer be considered as objective accounts; instead they appear as partisan documents of the interests of the two cardinals who had jointly controlled the flow and the content of most of the information that was exchanged between England and the Curia.

How astutely particularly Beaufort was able to employ this connection at the detriment of his rivals in England is exemplified by Giuliano Cesarini's English mission of 1425/6. A protégé of Branda, Cesarini was dispatched to England late in 1425 to discuss the revocation of the Statute of Provisors with the English government. During his protracted stay in England Cesarini stood in close contact with Henry Beaufort who, at that time, with Bedford's support, was discreetly reasserting his authority in English politics.²⁰ Upon his return from England, Cesarini duly reported that Beaufort and Bedford would be prepared to abolish the Statute of Provisors, were it not for the opposition of Gloucester and archbishop Chichele.²¹ Cesarini's reports were inaccurate: *de facto* Beaufort and Bedford would hardly have been more willing to grant Rome greater influence on ecclesiastical patronage in the Lancastrian dominion than Chichele and Gloucester.²² Yet, Cesarini's account threw a favourable light on Beaufort, thus preparing the ground for the English prelate's promotion to the cardinalate and his appointment as commander of the Hussite crusade early in 1427.²³ Meanwhile, Martin V held Chichele

¹⁹ HARVEY, pp. 97–8.

²⁰ WEISS, 23n, above, Part One, chapter three, pp. 45–7.

²¹ HALLER, pp. 297–301.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 269; FERGUSON, pp. 126–7; DAVIES, pp. 338–41; HARRISS, pp. 155–6; HARVEY, p. 144.

²³ Beaufort's commission with the crusade bears itself all the hallmarks of a collaboration between the English prelate and Cardinal Branda. Beaufort was recommended for this venture by his diplomatic skills and his elevated position in the government of what was still considered to be one of the foremost military powers of Europe, HOLMES, 'Beaufort and the Crusade', pp. 722–3. Branda, on the other hand, was predestined for the role of *primus inter pares* in the commission of cardinals that supervised the organisation of the crusade at the Curia because of his distinction as a confidant of Martin V and King Sigismund, his long-standing experience in central European politics, his close links with the auditor of the project, Giuliano Cesarini, and his good connections with the Medici, who were entrusted with the financial logistics of the enterprise, *ibid.*, and p. 743; HARRISS, p. 175. A successful crusade in Bohemia would have enhanced Branda's and Beaufort's standing in international politics; moreover, both prelates could have expected substantial rewards

and Gloucester responsible for the impasse concerning the revocation of the Statute of Provisors. In March 1427, a month after Beaufort and Bedford had left England for the continent, Chichele was suspended from the exercise of his powers as *legatus natus* and the joint protest of the archbishop and Gloucester, as nominal head of the English government, was refused a hearing at the Curia.²⁴

In the light of this evidence, Gloucester's and Chichele's repeated complaints of the systematic misrepresentation of their interests in Rome, Chichele's threats against Simone da Teramo in 1424, and the arrest of Giovanni Obizzi at Gloucester's orders in 1427, appear no longer as testimonies to their political paranoia or their high-handed approach to diplomacy, but as helpless attempts to break the hostile influence of the powerful Beaufort/Castiglione-connection that apparently held a virtual monopoly on the flow of information between England and the Curia.²⁵

In the introduction to this section it has been argued that middlemen assume their function with a view to an advantage they hope to derive from their activity. What advantages did Branda accrue from his services as mediator between the Curia and the English government? To answer this question, it is helpful, as a first step, to identify the cardinal's general objectives in politics. The driving force behind Branda's career in politics seems to have been dynastic ambition. The most traditional strategy the cardinal employed to advance his family was ecclesiastical patronage. In Branda's wake, members of the extended Castiglione clan, from the mid 1410s onwards,

in the form of financial and legal privileges in return for their efforts on behalf of the papacy and the German king. Given his close links with Sigismund, Branda da Castiglione would almost certainly have preferred Beaufort to have led his troops to Bohemia. Yet, the diversion, in 1429, of the crusading army into Lancastrian France, above, Part One, chapter four, p. 51 would hardly have been counter Branda's interests as it served the protection of the nascent Castiglione power base in Normandy, below, pp. 154–6. Whether Branda had been privy to the English plans is a matter of speculation; yet, in 1431 an expensive set of bronze and silver bells was on its way from England to Castiglione Olona, FOFANO, 'Costruzione di Castiglione Olona', p. 181. In the same year, Branda's great-nephew Giovanni, then still in his teens, received the lucrative canonry of the Vexin Normand at Rouen, MOLS, 'Castiglione, Giovanni', p. 1446. Evidence for curial proceedings against Beaufort's unauthorised action, on the other hand, remains inconclusive, HOLMES, 'Beaufort and the Crusade' pp. 748–50.

²⁴ DAVIES, pp. 338–42; HARRISS, pp. 155–6.

²⁵ On Gloucester's and Chichele's protests against misrepresentation and their proceedings against the papal envoys see VICKERS, pp. 324–8; HALLER, pp. 264–6, pp. 278–80; FERGUSON, pp. 124–8.

infiltrated the church hierarchy at all levels.²⁶ For all his unabashed nepotism, the cardinal must have been aware that at a time when traditional ideas of nobility were increasingly challenged by an upwardly mobile meritocracy, his descendants would ultimately not be able to protect their privileges solely by reference to hereditary rights. Therefore he provided for their education, placing several of his nephews in the school of the leading humanist pedagogue Gasparino Barzizza, before supporting their legal studies at Pavia, Padua, and Paris.²⁷

Even the most gifted teachers, however, would have been unable to remedy an innate lack of talent; and Pius II's scathing portrait of Branda's nephew, Giovanni, as a pompous ignoramus, suggests that not all members of the clan had inherited the cardinal's intellectual abilities.²⁸ From the beginning of his career, Branda therefore took care to attract gifted men into his service. His most brilliant discovery was undoubtedly Giuliano Cesarini. Cesarini was in his early twenties when he joined Branda's service in 1422, and—like many of the other bright young men who sported Branda's livery—he became a loyal supporter of the Castiglione family.²⁹

To ensure that his clan would be able to draw on a steady flow

²⁶ In 1419, Martin V made generous donations to Branda's nephews, who were then students at the university of Pavia, *Codice diplomatico dell'università di Pavia*, ed. R. MAIocchi (2 vols., Pavia, 1905–15), i, 178–83. Dozens of members of the Castiglione family received benefices in Milan and in Castiglione Olona, LITTA, iv, s.v. 'Castiglioni di Milano', passim. Branda's nephew, Bartolomeo, was honorary chamberlain of Martin V and Eugenius IV. In 1434 he became bishop of Tortona, *ibid.*, tav. 4. For other nephews and great-nephews, such as Zanone, Giovanni, and Branda da Castiglione jr., benefices and canonicates that they were granted when they were still in their teens, were the starting point for their later careers in the higher echelons of ecclesiastical administration and diplomacy. See below, passim.

²⁷ *Codice diplomatico*, i, 142, 178–83; FOFFANO, T., 'Tra Padova, Parma e Pavia: appunti su tre allievi di Gasparino Barzizza', *Quaderni per la Storia dell'Università di Padova*, ii (1969), 29–42.

²⁸ PICCOLOMINI, A.S., *Pii II commentarii rerum memorabilium que temporibus suis contigerunt*, ed. A. VAN HECK, Studi e Testi, cccxii–iii (2 vols., Vatican City, 1984), i, 256.

²⁹ STRNAD, A.A./WALSH, K., 'Cesarini, Giuliano', *DBI*, xxiv (Rome, 1980), 188–95, at p. 189; MOLS, R., 'Cesarini, Julien', *DHGE*, xii (Paris, 1953), 220–49, at p. 221; FOFFANO, 'Tra Costanza e Basilea', pp. 26–7; DA BISTICCI, V., *Le Vite*, ed. A. GRECO (2 vols., Florence, 1970), i, 139–40. On Branda's household *ibid.*, i, 120–1. At different times, the cardinal's *familia* accommodated the French canonist Jean de Guillois, TABBAGH, V., 'Le clergé séculier du diocèse de Rouen à la fin du Moyen Age 1359–1493', (Lille Univ., thèse de doctorat, 1994), pp. 970–1. the Flemish notary Mattes de Beke, the German clerk Nikolaus Beyer, who respectively acted as the cardinal's chamberlain and secretary, Rouen, Archives Départementales de la Seine Maritime (ADSM), G 3677 (foundation charter for Norman scholarships at the Castiglione college in Pavia, 1437), and the Bohemian theologian Jan of Olmütz, BONDIOLI, p. 476.

of such fresh talent in perpetuity, Branda, in 1429, translated the informal patronage he exercised in his personal household into the framework of a permanent institution when he founded a college for twenty-four poor scholars at Pavia. Half of the scholars were to be presented by the Castiglione family; the other half was to be recruited in the northern and central European dioceses in which Branda had accumulated benefices in the course of his career. The latter stipulation was clearly a bid to maintain the international connections that had been established by Branda.³⁰

The scholarships at Pavia were mainly intended for students pursuing degrees in law, theology, or medicine. Yet the cardinal was no stranger to the *studia humanitatis*. He was one of the earliest recipients of apographa of the classical texts recovered during the Council of Constance, and, shortly before his death, the nonagenarian Branda received the humanist antiquarian Ciriaco da Ancona at Castiglione Olona.³¹ Ciriaco would undoubtedly have been impressed by the cardinal's ancestral home which Branda had converted into a representative court complex, comprising two new churches, several *palazzi* for family members, a school for the children of Castiglione Olona and a public library.³² The design of these buildings and their interior decoration combined local traditions with elements of the international Gothic style and references to the latest architectural and artistic achievements of Quattrocento Florence.³³

To the day of his death Branda thus combined adherence to traditional values with an openness to new ideas and a markedly internationalist outlook in the pursuit of his dynastic ambition. All of these elements came into sharp focus in his endeavours to establish a new power-base for his family in Lancastrian France. In 1419, the cardinal received a first canonry in Rouen. A year later, Martin V appointed Branda—with the acquiescence of the English king—to the see of Lisieux; concurrently he was invested with the archdeaconry of Rouen and a canonry in Bayeux. Branda never took possession

³⁰ *Codice diplomatico*, i, 251–61, particularly pp. 253–4; HERVAL, pp. 190–1; MOLS, 'Castiglione, Branda', p. 1442.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1442. SABBADINI, R., *Storia a Critica di Testi Latini*, Medioevo e Umanesimo, xi (Padua, 1914, 1971), 290–1; FOFFANO, 'Tra Padova'.

³² GIRGENSOHN, pp. 72–3; MOLS, 'Castiglione, Branda', pp. 1442–3; SOLDI RONDININI, pp. 154–6; HERVAL, pp. 187–91; JOANNIDES and ROBERTS, P.L., *Masolino da Panicali* (Oxford, 1993), *passim*.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 165; JOANNIDES, p. 212, p. 231, p. 299; FOFFANO, 'Costruzione di Castiglione Olona', *passim*.

of Lisieux; late in 1423 the chapter therefore filed a complaint to the English government. Preempting any unfavourable action by the English, Branda immediately resigned his see into the hands of the Pope, who, in spring 1424, invested the cardinal's nephew, Zanone, with the bishopric and a plurality of Norman canonries.³⁴ Seven years later, the see of Bayeux, which was next in importance to Rouen, fell vacant. The ensuing chapter election was won by a local candidate: Jean d'Esquay. Yet d'Esquay, who enjoyed the backing of Philip of Burgundy, never entered possession of his see. Bedford, the English regent in France, wanted to contain Burgundian influence in Normandy; Martin V, on the other hand, had reserved Bayeux to the Papacy in 1429 and, therefore, did not wish a local election to stand in the way of what he considered the legitimate exercise of his prerogative.³⁵ The beneficiaries of this constellation were the Castiglione. Early in 1432 Zanone da Castiglione was transferred to Bayeux and swore fealty to the English government. The discreet influence of the Castiglione-client da Teramo ensured that D'Esquay's endeavours to contest the papal decision before the Council of Basel came to nothing in 1434. Thereafter, Zanone's legitimacy as bishop of Bayeux was no longer challenged.³⁶ Meanwhile, Zanone's cousins Giovanni and Branda jr. had joined Cardinal Branda as canons at Rouen, and Paris da Castiglione, another member of the clan, was a frequent visitor at Zanone's episcopal palace at Neuilly.³⁷ Profiting from the problematic relations between Martin V and the English government, Branda had thus instrumentalised his function as mediator between the competing forces, in the course of the 1420s, to extend his dynastic interests into Lancastrian Normandy, and by the mid-1430s, the Castiglione had become a force to be reckoned with in the ecclesiastical administration of the duchy.

³⁴ *Gallia Christiana* (16 vols., Paris, 1715–1865), xi, 791–3; CRUCIANI-TRONCARELLI, M.G., 'Castiglioni, Zanone', *DBI*, xxii (Rome, 1979), 178–81, at p. 178; MOLS, R., 'Castiglione, Zanon di', *DHGE*, xi (Paris, 1949), 1447–50, at p. 1447; ALLMAND, 'The Relations', pp. 222–3, pp. 231–2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 242–4; *id.*, 'Normandy and the Council of Basel', *Speculum*, xl, 1 (1965), pp. 1–14, at pp. 8–9; ZELFELDER, pp. 41–2, pp. 79–80; BRANDMÜLLER, p. 249; FOFFANO, 'Umanisti italiani', pp. 8–9; CRUCIANI-TRONCARELLI, pp. 178–9; MOLS, 'Castiglione, Zanon', p. 1448.

³⁷ TABBAGH, p. 204; MOLS, R., 'Castiglione, Branda di II', *DHGE*, xi (Paris, 1949), 1444–6; PETRUCCI, F., 'Castiglioni, Branda jr.', *DBI*, xxii (Rome, 1972), 126–8; *id.*, 'Castiglioni, Giovanni', *passim*; Caen, ADC, MS 205 (Zanone's account book for 1436), ff. 124v–127v.

The establishment of the Castiglione in Normandy had apparently been due to Cardinal Branda's connection with the dominant members of the English government, notably John, duke of Bedford and Henry Beaufort. Yet in autumn/winter 1437 Branda's nephew, Zanone, styled himself as broker of contacts between Beaufort's political rival, Humphrey, duke of Gloucester and the Italian humanist community. It is here proposed that this apparent deviation from the established policy of the Castiglione may have been caused by a shift in the political constellation at the head of the English government during this period and its effects on Lancastrian Normandy.

The failure of the Congress of Arras and Burgundy's defection in 1435 had weakened the English position in France; financially exhausted and bereft of Bedford, their most experienced military commander, the English in Lancastrian France had been unable to resist Charles VII's advances on their territory. Paris had fallen in April 1436, and although a large military expedition under the lead of the young duke of York in the early summer of that year had managed to suppress a rebellion in the Pays de Caux and stave off the immediate danger of a French recovery of Normandy, the situation in the duchy remained volatile and was further aggravated by the bad harvests of 1436 and 1437.³⁸

This situation must have appeared extremely threatening to the Castiglione who, in Bedford, had lost their protector in Lancastrian France and whose liaison-person in England, Cardinal Beaufort, was politically discredited after the débâcle at Arras. Meanwhile, Gloucester had emerged as the new champion in English politics. In the aftermath of his successful raid on Flanders, the duke, in 1436/7, enjoyed unprecedented popularity in England. As the last surviving brother of Henry V, Gloucester may have appeared as the natural heir to Bedford's legacy in France. The breakdown of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance seemed to vindicate the duke's staunch opposition to Beaufort's and Bedford's pro-Burgundian diplomacy. Finally, in view of the alarming French advances on Normandy, Gloucester's advocacy of a decisive English strike against Charles VII promised a more effective protection of Lancastrian France than Bedford's previous, defensive strategy.³⁹

The new scenario put Branda da Castiglione into a difficult situ-

³⁸ ALLMAND, *Lancastrian Normandy*, pp. 39–41, pp. 163–4; HARRISS, pp. 253–63.

³⁹ Above, Part One, chapter six.

ation: he needed to find a way that would permit him to initiate contacts with Gloucester, as the ascendant player on the political scene and potential new protector of Lancastrian Normandy. Meanwhile, Branda had to avoid irritations with his longterm partner Beaufort; for, although the English cardinal was seriously weakened in 1435/6, he had demonstrated his staying power on earlier occasions, and there was still a fair chance that he would soon return to the centre of government. Faced with this dilemma, Branda may have determined to shift the responsibility for the establishment of contacts with Gloucester to his nephew Zanone, who, after a failed mission at the Council of Basel, had joined him in Italy in 1435 and in the following five years remained with Branda at the Council of Ferrara/Florence.⁴⁰ Zanone's independent political profile was low; by delegating the initiation of contacts with Gloucester to his nephew, Branda da Castiglione would, therefore, have been able discreetly to approach the duke, without jeopardising his own good relations with Beaufort.⁴¹ Besides, the octogenarian Castiglione patriarch may have perceived such a *démarche* as an ideal way to introduce Zanone to the secrets of successful brokerage so that the young bishop would eventually be able to fend for his family's interests in France without the backing of his powerful uncle.

Whether Gloucester's request to Zanone of 1437 for recent humanist publications from Italy constituted his first friendly contact with the Castiglione, or whether relations between the two parties had been gradually warming since 1435, is impossible to reconstruct. In any case, the duke's demand must have alerted Zanone to the fact that literary brokerage might provide the Castiglione with an ideal

⁴⁰ CRUCIANI-TRONCARELLI, p. 179; MOLS, 'Castiglione, Zanone', p. 1148; SCHOFIELD, A.N.E.D., 'England and the Council of Basel', *AHC*, V, 1 (1973), pp. 1-117, at pp. 68-9; ALLMAND, 'Normandy and Basel', pp. 10-11; ZELFELDER, pp. 110-12.

⁴¹ In May 1437, Eugenius IV confirmed Zanone as chancellor of the newly established university of Caen, a Lancastrian prestige project, PRENTOUT, H., 'Esquisse d'une histoire de l'université de Caen', in BIGOT, A. (ed.), 'L'université de Caen—son passé, son présent' (Paris, 1932), pp. 29-55, at pp. 35-6. Generally, however, Zanone did not appear as an independent agent during this period; instead his action appears to have been closely coordinated with that of his powerful uncle, compare BEKYNTON, i, 13-15 (September 1440, Henry VI demands Zanone's backing for Branda's endeavours to obtain promotion of Robert, abbot of Mont St. Michel). Branda's continued collaboration with Beaufort during this period is attested by his (and Zanone's) support in summer/autumn 1437 of the English petition to let Beaufort's close ally, Lewis of Luxemburg hold the see of Ely *in commendam*, *ibid.*, pp. 4-12; HARVEY, p. 163.

medium to obtain a rapprochement with Gloucester without offending Beaufort. For whereas humanist presentation copies and the mediation of contacts with humanist authors in Italy were bound to meet with the enthusiasm of the bibliophile duke, such friendly services were unlikely to cause problems with Beaufort, whose interest in literature seems to have been limited.⁴²

Besides, the Castiglione would have had no problems in enlisting humanists for their cause. Branda's connections with leading members of the literary avantgarde have already been mentioned. Moreover, Gloucester's appeal had reached Zanone on his way to the Council of Ferrara/Florence the central talent-fair, during this period, for humanists in search of employment. Most of them would have been only too happy to oblige the bishop of Bayeux, in the hope that they would thus recommend themselves to the powerful protection of Cardinal Branda or of Giuliano Cesarini, who was at that time emerging as one of the foremost ecclesiastic patrons of humanism in Italy.⁴³ Meanwhile, Zanone had enough literary expertise to select suitable texts and authors for Gloucester, and apparently he was sufficiently informed of the duke's political objectives to give the humanists he had recruited precise instructions concerning the content of the covering letters that were to accompany their dedication copies for Gloucester.⁴⁴

⁴² Compare Zanone's note to Decembrio of late 1437, in which he thanked the humanist for his decision to dedicate his translation of Plato's *Republic* to Gloucester, DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', f. 31v, "Spero inde ipsius Principis gratiam facilius consequi, et ab eo carius amari et non minus tibi id continget, quam tanto honore ipsum decorabis, et tam honestissimum munus illi destinabis, quo nihil iocundius ac carius et gustui suo, statuique convenientius tribui posset."

⁴³ Below, Part Three, chapter eighteen, pp. 232–6.

⁴⁴ Apparently, his training in the school of Gasparino Barzizza shaped Zanone's intellectual outlook for his remaining life. The bishop employed humanist secretaries in his household MAZZUCONI, D., 'Stefano Fieschi da Soncino un allievo di Gasparino Barzizza', *IMU*, XXIV (1981), pp. 257–85, and, at least Rolando Talenti, who served him for almost thirty years, seems to have been bound to him by a close personal friendship rather than by a master-servant relationship, TALENTI, 'Epistolary' passim. During the Council of Basel, Zanone bought and personally collated humanist manuscripts, DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', ff. 13v–14v, 31v–32r. How highly he valued his books, appears from his determined and ultimately successful attempts to recover a humanist miscellany that had been stolen from his episcopal palace, FOFFANO, 'Umanisti italiani', p. 21n. Finally, his selection of humanist luxury copies of works by Cicero and Valerius Maximus which Zanone respectively presented to Gloucester and Charles, duke of Orléans in the 1430s and 1440s bears witness to his aesthetic discernment, *ibid.*, p. 20; *id.*, 'Charles d'Orléans e un gruppo di umanisti Lombardi in Normandia', *Aevum*, xli (1967), 452–73, at p. 458. SAMMUT, p. 119, no. 30.

Writing to the duke in England at Zanone's demand, humanists like Lapo da Castiglionchio pandered to Gloucester's self-image in the 1430s as *tutor*, loyal servant and principal advisor of Henry VI and as a popular leader who successfully defended the military legacy of Henry V. The flattering reference to Gloucester's solicitude for Henry VI's education in the covering letter to his *Comparatio inter Rem Militarem et Studia Litterarum*, which Lapo da Castiglionchio sent to Gloucester at Zanone's request late in 1437, has already been cited.⁴⁵ Roughly at the same time, Castiglionchio praised the duke's virtues as a civil administrator and military leader in the dedicatory epistle that accompanied his present to Gloucester of a translation of Plutarch's *Life of Artaxerxes*:

Etenim admirabatur primum idque lubens ac pleno, ut ita dicam, ore ad celum efferens tuam illam divinam atque admirabilem sapientiam in eo regno constituendo, quod cure ac tutele tue creditum foret in temperandis moderandisque civitatibus, in conciliandis tibi tuorum voluntatibus, in prospiciendis vitandisque hostium insidiis ac periculis declinandis, qua ita excellis omnibus, ut sibi in iis gerendis atque administrandis non humano consilio sed divina quadam mente ut videris . . . Commemorabat [Zanonus] preterea victorias, triumphos summa cum laude terra marique partos; nec preteribat tacitus trophea, spolia exuviasque et terrestres et nauticas quibus totum regnum decorasses: quibus rebus non modo Britanie regnum florentissimum et maximum tot iam per annos tutatus esses, sed multas etiam urbes atque adeo regiones in ditionem redequisses, bellicosissimas quoque gentes et nationes bello devictas tuo parere imperio cohequisses; tuum vero nomen cum maximum ac formidolosissimum ad extremos usque occidentis terminos prestitisses; in aliis etiam regionibus eo iam magnitudinis provexisses, ut omnibus stupori admirationique haberetur.⁴⁶

Similar adulation characterised Antonio Pacini's contemporary dedicatory letter to his translation of Plutarch's *Life of Marius*.⁴⁷ Both Castiglionchio and Pacini explicitly emphasised that they had received their favourable impression of Gloucester from Zanone da Castiglione. Thus Pacini claimed:

Zanonus quoque episcopus Baiocensis, praestantissimus vir ac singularibus virtutibus, praeco tuarum laudum tantum tibi tribuit, atque ita nomen tuum ad sidera tollit, ut nunquam conquiescere posse videatur,

⁴⁵ Above, Part One, chapter five, pp. 62–3.

⁴⁶ SAMMUT, pp. 168–69, ll. 24–31, ll. 47–57.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 171–3.

quousque ostenderit sua dicendi facundia omnibus his clarissimis viris animi nobilitate parem te esse. Nam si in sermonem quandoque rerum bellicarum egregie gestarum incidit, te non modo laude principum huius aetatis, verum etiam priscis omnibus imperatoribus quos memoravimus parem te disserendo confirmat.⁴⁸

Clearly, these dedicatory letters were intended to recommend the Castiglione to Gloucester at a time when the insecure situation in Lancastrian France seemed to render it opportune for them to seek a rapprochement with the duke as hopeful contender for the military leadership in Lancastrian France. Therefore it is here proposed that late in 1437, Zanone da Castiglione styled himself as a middleman between Gloucester and the Italian humanist community because he hoped, thereby, to win the duke as a protector of Castiglione interests in Normandy.

Yet by the time the Castiglione in Italy decided to cultivate Gloucester, the duke's star in England was already sinking. His failure to assert his claim to Bedford's territories in Normandy and Anjou resulted, within less than two years, in his permanent loss of influence on English foreign policy. The duke's lack of support in magnate circles meant that he did not manage to secure a dominant position in the conciliar government that was reinstated in November 1437. Finally, Gloucester had lost the confidence of Henry VI, who favoured instead Suffolk and his satellites at court.⁴⁹

Apparently, the Castiglione soon realised that Gloucester would be of little help to them in the English government; accordingly Zanone's enthusiasm as mediator of contacts between the English duke and Italian humanists began to flag. Even though the bishop remained in Italy until mid-1439, there is no evidence that he was in any way active on Gloucester's behalf after December 1437. During the following six years, the duke seems to have disappeared as an asset from the books of the Castiglione, who reverted instead to their traditional cooperation with the dominant powers in England. In 1440 Branda supported the royal foundations at Eton and King's College. In 1441, Zanone da Castiglione was appointed as a honorary secretary of Henry VI; early in 1442 he became a member of the English royal council with a pension of 1000 *livres tournois* per annum. Giovanni da Castiglione served as papal collector in England

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 171–2, ll. 8–16.

⁴⁹ Above, Part I, chapters six to ten.

and Ireland between 1440 and 1442; in 1444 he was invested with the bishopric of Coutances; two years later he joined Zanone in the English royal council. This suggests that the Castiglione managed successfully to arrange themselves with Suffolk's court regime.⁵⁰

Only some time in 1442/3 did the Castiglione try to revive their relations with Gloucester. Under the impression of the French advances in Gascony and the growing threat to Normandy, Zanone addressed an impassioned plea for strong financial support and heavy military presence in Lancastrian Normandy to the duke.⁵¹ As in 1437, Zanone masterfully played up to Gloucester's self-image as custodian of Henry V's political legacy. Although the duke's commission with the *tutela* of Henry VI was not mentioned explicitly (six years into Henry VI's nominally personal rule such references would hardly have been opportune any more), the words "tutela" and "custodia" appear throughout the text.⁵² Alluding obliquely to the nature of their previous contacts and to Gloucester's integrative understanding of theory and action, Zanone appealed to the duke:

Nam qui tot bonarum arcium studiis eruditus es, qui tot sapientissimos doctores, tot probata volumina lectitasti, certe non ignoras quantus eluceat splendor in pietate regia, et quam proprium sit iustissimi principis preservare subditos a calamitate e miseria.⁵³

He then pandered to Gloucester's self-image as defender of the *res publica* against neglect and misgovernment.⁵⁴ Finally, accounting for the duke's recourse to historical precedent for the formulation of his own policy, Zanone invoked the authority of the famous rulers of antiquity and annals of English history to incite Gloucester to the defence of Henry V's continental legacy.⁵⁵

Zanone's appeal to Gloucester was symptomatic of the policy of

⁵⁰ CRUCIANI-TRONCARELLI, pp. 179–80; ALLMAND, 'Relations', pp. 131–41.

⁵¹ London, Lambeth Palace, MS 211 ff. 103r–104r, edited in *La désolation des églises, monastères et hôpitaux en France pendant la guerre de cent ans*, ed. H. DÉNIFLE (2 vols., Paris, 1897–9), i, 520–25, reprinted in SAMMUT, pp. 218–23.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 219, l. 30, p. 220, l. 70, l. 83, p. 221, l. 95, l. 99.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 219, ll. 31–5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 219–20, ll. 41–80. For Gloucester's self-image as protector of the commonweal see above, Part One, chapter seven, pp. 93–7.

⁵⁵ SAMMUT, pp. 221–2, ll. 107–32. The effect of Zanone's letter was undoubtedly reinforced by the contemporaneous memorandum of Rolando Talenti which reiterated and highlighted the central themes of his master's supplication, *ibid.*, pp. 223–6, compare particularly Talenti's lengthy reference to Gloucester's self-image as continuator of Henry V's mission, *ibid.*, p. 225–6, ll. 79–110.

the Castiglione during this period in so far as the duke—just like Henry Beaufort, Cardinal Kemp, and Lewis of Luxemburg, to whom Zanone directed similar pleas—was a member of the old guard, whose heyday in English politics was past.⁵⁶ The new men about Henry VI such as Suffolk, Thomas Bekynton, or Adam Moleyns, or, alternatively, the duke of York, as an independent contender for dominance in Normandy, are conspicuously absent from the list of men whose backing Zanone sought during the early 1440s.⁵⁷ Apparently, the Castiglione no longer closely followed the shifting coalitions at the head of the English government. This waning interest in English politics may have been due to the fact that by the early 1440s, the survival of the Castiglione in Normandy no longer depended on English backing.

Two factors contributed to this growing emancipation. First, even after the death of Cardinal Branda in February 1443, the Castiglione could count on powerful support at the Curia.⁵⁸ Second, from their first arrival in the duchy, the Castiglione had endeavoured to establish a local network of support by the judicious exercise of patronage. The account of Zanone's consecration as bishop of Lisieux in 1425 in the Rouen chapter deliberations illustrates how skilfully the Castiglione appropriated local traditions for their own purposes. Newly elected bishops in the archdiocese of Rouen were traditionally expected to treat the cathedral chapter, the leading members of the archbishop's spiritual court, and the town notables to a banquet. In the course of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, these feasts seem to have become ever more exclusive events that were open only to the leading members of the archiepiscopal court.⁵⁹ At the

⁵⁶ TALENTI, 'Epistolary', ff. 14r-v (letter to Cardinal Kemp, 1443), edited by DÉNIFLE, i, 530-31; ff. 33v-34v (letter to Beaufort, 1443). For Gloucester's position in English government during this period see above, Part one, chapters eight to nine.

⁵⁷ York's absence from this list appears even more surprising in view of the fact that Zanone, as one of the most senior ecclesiastical administrators in the duchy, closely collaborated with the duke during the early 1440s, MOLS, 'Castiglione, Zanon', pp. 1448-9.

⁵⁸ In the consistory, they could rely on Branda's close friend and collaborator of over thirty years, Gerardo Landriani (d. 1445), FOFFANO, 'Un carteggio', pp. 299-314. In the apostolic secretariat members of the old guard, such as Poggio and Andrea da Florentia, were still in office and wielded considerable influence, above, pp. 147-50, WALSER, p. 221; MERCATI, p. 105.

⁵⁹ At his consecration as bishop of Lisieux in 1397, Guillaume d'Estouteville invited the chapter, the leading members of the archiepiscopal court and the leading secular notables of the region to a banquet. Rouen, Archives Départementales

same time, the new bishops seem to have been decreasingly willing to regale their superiors to such banquets; for they now frequently chose to deliver themselves from their obligation by paying the chapter a lump-sum.⁶⁰ Not so Zandone. Branda's nephew was twenty-four when he was invested with the see of Lisieux; he was a foreigner who owed his promotion to the cooperation of his powerful uncle, the pope, and the English. This background would hardly have gained him many sympathies in local quarters. To better his image, Zandone, at a meeting of the chapter of Rouen, declared his intention to honour local customs by holding the traditional banquet in the most splendid manner possible. Yet, he explained, he was unfamiliar with local conventions and inexperienced in the organisation of such an event; he therefore apologised in advance for any mistakes he might make in the arrangement of the feast. Touched by Zandone's apparent candour, his generosity and goodwill, the Rouen chapter gave him *carte blanche* to organise the event according to his own wishes. The great day came; yet when it was time to enter the hall that had been prepared for the feast, it turned out that Zandone had invited many more people than the chapter thought proper. The chapter deliberations give a vivid account of the ensuing scuffle and of the way in which Zandone managed to cajole the archbishop into receiving the gatecrashers, if not at his own table, then at least in an adjacent hall, where they were treated to a splendid meal that culminated in that *non plus ultra* of medieval culinary refinement: four roasted peacocks, brought to table in their full plumage. Everybody who was somebody in Rouen was present that night, and if all members of the party were only half as impressed by Zandone's feast as the author of the account in the chapter deliberations, the young

de la Seine Maritime (ADSM) G 2119 (Délibérations capitulaires, Rouen, 1392–1401), f. 79r–v. At the inception of Thomas Basin as bishop of Lisieux, in November 1451, the chapter of Rouen and the immediate *familia* of the archbishop alone attended the banquet; members of the chapter of Lisieux were admitted to the feast only after lengthy discussion, Rouen, ADSM, G 2134 (Délibérations capitulaires, Rouen 1449–1454), f. 138v. See also BASIN, T., *Histoire des règnes de Charles VII et de Louis XI*, ed. J. QUICHERAT, Société de l'Histoire de France, xl–xliii (Paris, 1855–9), iv, 153–8.

⁶⁰ In 1421 Nicolaus Habart, the new bishop of Bayeux, payed 200 *livres tournois* to be dispensed of his duties to the chapter of Rouen, ADSM, G 2123 (Délibérations capitulaires, Rouen 1421–4), f. 10r. In 1440, the newly elected bishops of Coutances and Evreux, payed 100 *saluces* and 100 *livres tournois* respectively for the same purpose, Rouen, ADSM, G 2129 (Délibérations capitulaires, Rouen 1438–41), f. 96r–v.

Italian bishop would still have taken the hearts—or rather the stomachs—of the locals by storm.⁶¹

As bishop of Bayeux, Zanone continued to tap into local traditions in order to enhance his own standing. The legend that the favourite disciple of St Régnobert, a local saint whose miracle-working cloak was venerated as a relic, had been called Zénon, apparently inspired Zanone to commission the reconstruction of the derelict hall of St Régnobert.⁶² Zanone also paid for the splendid reinterment in the cathedral of Bayeux of Pierre de Villaines, a fourteenth century bishop of Bayeux, who—against his express wishes—had been buried at Neuilly because, at the time of his death, the *chevauchées* of the English had rendered the translation of his body to Bayeux too dangerous.⁶³ Moreover, Zanone donated numerous valuable vestments and liturgical instruments to the cathedral, and in 1456 he founded four chantries worth 1200 *livres tournois*.⁶⁴ At the same time, Zanone and other members of the Castiglione clan became active in the secular domain, acting as creditors to the local nobility.⁶⁵

⁶¹ The full account is in Rouen, ADSM, G 2124 (Délibérations capitulaires, Rouen 1424–6), ff. 59v–61r. Even Zanone was, however, apparently not prepared more than once to go at such lengths for his new parishioners. When he was transferred to Bayeux, he did not give a banquet but donated a dictionary in three volumes estimated at 200 *l.t.* to the chapter library at Rouen, Rouen, ADSM, G 2127 (Délibérations capitulaires, Rouen, 1432–6), f. 71r.

⁶² In 1436 alone, Zanone spent 212s38d on this project, Caen, ADC, MS 205, ff. 113r–114r. Work on the hall was only completed in 1444, Caen, ADC, MS 721 'Histoire des Evêques de Bayeux' (anonymous 18th century manuscript), f. 120. On St Régnobert and his disciple Zénon, *ibid.*, pp. 11–2 and Caen, ADC, MS 8, 'Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la ville et diocèse de Bayeux, par l'abbé Regnault chanoine' (2 vols., 1789), i, 62v.

⁶³ 'Extraits des Délibérations du Chapitre de Bayeux (XIV^e–XVII^e siècle)', ed. L. LE MÂLE, *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de la Normandie*, xliii (1935), 82–240, at p. 195. LE MÂLE edited Caen, ADC, MS 224/I, a convolute of late seventeenth century extracts from the medieval chapter deliberations of Bayeux. Since the original deliberations were destroyed during the Revolution, the following reconstruction of Zanone's activity in Bayeux relies on these extracts, supplemented by Caen, ADC, MS 6, GIROUARD, J., 'Histoire du diocèse de Bayeux' (1770); MS 8; MS 721, and MS 722, ALEXANDRE, G., 'Généalogie des Evêques de Bayeux' (1792), all of which are based on the original deliberations.

⁶⁴ *Mémoires pour servir à l'état historique et géographique du diocèse de Bayeux*, ed. M. BÉZIERS (2 vols., Rouen, 1895–1896), ii, 22–30. On Zanone's chantries, Caen, ADC, MS 721, f. 120; MS 6, ff. 50–51.

⁶⁵ Caen, ADC, 7 E 91 (Tabellionage de Caen, 1451), fols. 211v, 238v; 7 E 92 (Tabellionage de Caen, 1452), 95r; Rouen, ADSM, 1 B 29 (Registre de l'Échiquier, 1452), f. 117v; 1 B 30 (Registre de l'Échiquier, 1455), f. 78v; 1 B 35 (Registre de l'Échiquier, 1462), 78v; 1 B 37 (Registre de l'Échiquier, 1463), f. 110v; 1 B 39 (Registre des Lettres et Appointments, 1463), f. 244v. I would like to thank Dr.

Yet the patronage of the Castiglione in Normandy did not remain confined to the appropriation and continuation of existing local traditions, but also established new ones. When Cardinal Branda founded his college at Pavia in 1429, he reserved one of the twelve international scholarships for a candidate from Rouen. Three years later, Branda instituted two additional scholarships for students from Bayeux and Lisieux.⁶⁶ Three of the earliest scholars from Rouen who took up their studies at Pavia in the 1430s were Hector Cocquerel, Thomas Basin, and Jean de Guillois.⁶⁷ All three were sons of local notables and thus hardly fulfilled Branda's stipulation that his scholarships should benefit poor students. The case of Jean de Guillois who was almost certainly a relative of Bartolomé de Guillois, Branda's erstwhile vicar-general at Lisieux, suggests, rather, that these candidates were selected because they or their families had already proved their loyalty to the Castiglione.⁶⁸

These instances of their patronage in France suggest that just as in the 1410s and 1420s Cardinal Branda had combined local traditions with new impulses in the exercise of his patronage in Italy, his relatives in Lancastrian Normandy synthesised French and Italian elements in their own attempts to consolidate their standing in the duchy. Patronage on this scale was expensive, and given that in 1436/37 Zanone da Castiglione's income from his see barely came to 350 *livres tournois*, it is hard to escape the conclusion that for a long time, the engagement of the Castiglione in Normandy was a losing business.⁶⁹ Yet patronage is a longterm investment, and its results only become tangible over time. In the case of the Castiglione it took some fifteen years before their venture first began to pay off.

In November 1438, the dean of Rouen cathedral died. In the ensuing election, the Castiglione-protégé, Hector Cocquerel, who had

G. Prosser at the Institute of Historical Research, London, for generously passing this information on to me.

⁶⁶ *Codice diplomatico*, ii, 363; FOFFANO, 'Umanisti italiani', pp. 14–6.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15; TABBAGH, p. 192, p. 871, p. 905, pp. 970–71.

⁶⁸ For Branda's stipulation see *Codice diplomatico*, i, 254–5. On Bartolomé de Guillois, *Gallia Christiana*, xi, 792. On Jean de Guillois, TABBAGH, p. 970–71. For Thomas Basin's background, see BASIN, iv, 145–7.

⁶⁹ The income of the bishop of Bayeux was estimated at 2000 *livres tournois* p.a., Caen, ADC, MS 194 (15th century list of the estimated worth of all benefices in the diocese of Bayeux), f. 1r. According to the account in Caen, ADC, MS 205, f. 93r, Zanone received 1774.111 *l.t.* in 1436/37. After deduction of all expenses, Zanone was left with a net income of 351.021 *l.t.*, *ibid.*, f. 128r.

just returned from Italy, lost against one Guillaume Erard.⁷⁰ As a consolation prize, Cocquerel received the deanery of Lisieux. Guillaume Erard was not able to enjoy his new dignity at Rouen for long: a few months after his election he was found dead. His untimely demise opened the way for the election of a Castiglione client: Jean de Guillois, who had become a chaplain in Branda's household after completing his course at Pavia.⁷¹ Thomas Basin, finally, returned to Normandy in 1441; a year later, he became chancellor of the university of Caen, and in 1447 he was promoted to the bishopric of Lisieux.⁷²

By the mid-1440s, several local clients of the Castiglione had thus assumed important positions in the ecclesiastical administration of Normandy. This allowed the Castiglione ever more openly to flirt with the French authorities. Already in February 1442, on the occasion of the congress of Nevers, Zanone's secretary, Rolando Talenti, had addressed an exhortation to peace to Charles, duke of Orléans, who after his release from English captivity in 1439, had almost immediately drifted into the French camp.⁷³ Concurrently, the duke received a valuable codex of Valerius Maximus from Zanone.⁷⁴ Two years later, Zanone seems to have employed his participation in the Anglo-French negotiations at Tours as an opportunity for a discreet rapprochement with Charles VII.⁷⁵

Their contacts with the prospective rulers of the duchy and the consolidation of their independent standing in Normandy explain why the steady flow of Castiglione family members who came from Italy to establish themselves in northern France did not break off during the second half of the 1440s, when it became increasingly obvious that the days of English rule in Normandy were ineluctably drawing to their close.⁷⁶ Moreover, these French contacts account

⁷⁰ *Gallia Christiana*, xi, 119.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 810; ALLMAND, 'The Relations', pp. 312–3.

⁷² PRENTOUT, pp. 50–51; *Gallia Christiana*, xi, 795–8.

⁷³ TALENTI, 'Epistolary', ff. 6r–13r, edited by FOFFANO, 'Charles d'Orléans', pp. 461–9. For the date of that text *ibid.*, p. 457.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 458.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*; MOLS, 'Castiglione, Zanon', p. 1448.

⁷⁶ For the benefices of various members of the Castiglione family in the archdiocese of Rouen in the 1430s and 1440s see Rouen, ADSM, G 2133, (*Registrum receptionum dominorum canonicorum et cappellanorum in ecclesia Rothomagensie*, 1431–1447), ff. 10v, 31v, 47v, 87v, 88r, 139r, 144v, 170v, 176v and TABBAGH ad indicem. At his elevation to the see of Coutances in 1444, Giovanni da Castiglione resigned his canonry in Rouen into the hands of his cousin, Guglielmo da Castiglione,

for the fact that the Castiglione, as erstwhile stalwarts of English occupational rule, survived the recovery of Normandy by Charles VII without any major losses to their privileges.

In September 1449 Coutances, the see of Giovanni da Castiglione was reconquered by the French. Some eight months later, on 17 May 1450, Bayeux was the last town in the province of Rouen to surrender to Charles VII. To commemorate the French recovery in perpetuity Zanone decreed the institution of an annual holiday, and Rolando Talenti, who had—only seven years earlier—emphatically affirmed the English claim to Normandy, composed an address to the French king that celebrated the liberation of the duchy from its English oppressors.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, Charles VII, who had previously reproached Eugenius IV for giving Norman benefices to “persons unknown to us, who are complete strangers to our kingdom, and to others in the obedience and on the side of our enemies”, granted “les gens d’église du pays Italien” of Bayeux letters of denization, and confirmed them in their benefices.⁷⁸

Zanone’s retirement from politics after 1450 and Giovanni da Castiglione’s resignation, in 1453, from Coutances in favour of the bishopric of Pavia, have hitherto been interpreted as indications that the French recovery of the duchy put an end to the high aspirations of the Castiglione in Normandy.⁷⁹ Yet the evidence suggests, rather, that the Castiglione employed their temporary absence from the limelight for the consolidation of their standing with the new rulers. Even after the French recovery of the duchy, members of the Castiglione clan continued to come from Italy to northern France;

who can be traced in Normandy from 1436 onward, TABBAGH, p. 169, Caen, ADC, MS 205, ff. 124r–127v. By the mid-1440s, Branda da Castiglione jr. was a canon of the chapter of Rouen and held several benefices in the archdiocese, MOLS, ‘Castiglione, Branda II’, pp. 1444–5. He and a Petrus da Castiglione are also listed in the registers of the university of Caen in the mid-1440s, *Inventaires Sommaires des Archives Départementales du Calvados antérieures à 1790. Archives civiles, Série D, II*, (Université de Caen), ed. A. BENET (Caen, 1894), p. 10. The duchy also attracted secular members of the Castiglione family such as Cristoforo da Castiglione, *écuyer* of the duke of Alençon, who bought land in Normandy during the second half of the 1440s, ALLMAND, *Lancastrian Normandy*, p. 294.

⁷⁷ For Talenti’s praise of the English occupation see TALENTI, ‘Epistolary’, ff. 14v–16v (Talentì to Gloucester, fragment, end missing) edited by DÉNIFLE, i, 526–30, reprinted by SAMMUT, pp. 223–6. For his oration to Charles VII see, TALENTI, ‘Epistolary’, ff. 53v–55v.

⁷⁸ *Ordonnances*, xiii, 177–9, cf. LEWIS, P.S., *Later Medieval France* (London, 1968), p. 325; Caen, ADC, MS 201/VII, (fragmented cartulary, 1450).

⁷⁹ CRUCIANI-TRONCARELLI, p. 180; PETRUCCI, ‘Castiglione, Giovanni’, p. 156.

they studied at the university of Caen and were subsequently invested with Norman benefices.⁸⁰ French scholars continued to take up their studies at the Castiglione college in Pavia to assume, after their return to Normandy, leading positions in the ecclesiastical administration of the duchy.⁸¹ Meanwhile, Giovanni da Castiglione doggedly pursued his career in the church, presumably, to be able to protect the interests of his family more effectively. A member of consistory from 1456, he acted as cardinal protector of the university of Caen.⁸² When it became obvious, in the course of the conclave of 1458, that Giovanni himself stood no chance of winning the papal tiara, he lent his support to the French candidate, Guillaume d'Estouteville, rather than to Ænea Silvio Piccolomini, thus provoking the telling comment by Piccolomini:

En quantum a tuis maioribus degeneras! Patruus tuus, sive avunculus, . . . Branda curiam apostolicam ex Germania in Italiam reportavit; tu eius nepos, ex Italia transferes in Galliam!⁸³

D'Estouteville lost the election; his contacts with Giovanni da Castiglione, however, apparently remained close. For in the late 1450s, rumours circulated at the court of Milan that Giovanni da Castiglione channelled Milanese state secrets to Charles VII via d'Estouteville.⁸⁴

D'Estouteville would not have been the only friend of the Castiglione at the French court. At the latest from 1451 onwards they could also count on a powerful advocate of their interests in the immediate environs of Charles VII: the royal physician, Thomas le Franc. A native of Corfu, le Franc seems to have been a member of Cardinal Branda's *familia* in the late 1410s. In 1420, le Franc had passed into

⁸⁰ In 1451, Antonio da Castiglione, canon of Coutances, is listed in the register of the university of Caen. In 1454, Petrus da Castiglione became rector of the university. Three years later, Franciscus da Castiglione acted as witness at the election of Petrus' successor. *Inventaires Sommaires*, pp. 11–12. In 1462, Guglielmo da Castiglione is listed as archdeacon of Bayeux, Caen, ADC, MS 204/1, f. 2r. He still held that office in 1476, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque du chapitre de Bayeux*, ed. E. DESLANDES (Paris, 1889), p. 287.

⁸¹ Charles Paon, who went to Pavia in the 1440s, became a canon of Rouen after his return to Normandy, TABBAGH, p. 192. Guillaume Toustain, another former student at Branda's college became abbot of the abbey of St. Etienne at Caen in 1468, FOFFANO, 'Umanisti italiani', p. 15. LE MÂLE, p. 147, records regular presentations to the Bayeux scholarship between 1438 and 1491.

⁸² FOFFANO, 'Umanisti italiani', p. 18.

⁸³ PICCOLIMINI, i, 101–3; FOFFANO, 'Umanisti italiani', p. 18n; ILARDI, p. 1135n, pp. 1139–41.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 1140–41.

the service of Henry V.⁸⁵ After the king's death, le Franc joined the household of Cardinal Beaufort; his denization, which Beaufort procured in 1436, and his provision with an English sinecure in 1440 testify to the cardinal's esteem for le Franc.⁸⁶ The physician remained in Beaufort's service until the cardinal's death. All this time, le Franc apparently remained in contact with the Castiglione, and in the early 1440s he sent his son Guglielmo to study at the university of Caen.⁸⁷

Last recorded in England in 1447, Thomas le Franc reappeared on the scene in 1450 as personal physician and member of the royal council of Charles VII.⁸⁸ Reporting from the French court to Francesco Sforza in the mid-1450s, the Milanese ambassador noted that "Maestro Thomaso Grecho [i.e. le Franc] . . . può del Re e de tutta la Corte quello possiti voy da mi".⁸⁹ Meanwhile, the continuing good relations between the powerful physician and Zanone da Castiglione are attested by Zanone's gift of a book which he apparently highly valued to le Franc in 1454.⁹⁰

Some fifteen years later, the Castiglione were no longer dependent on mediators in their relations with the French court: during

⁸⁵ In July 1420 Poggio Bracciolini, who was then in the service of Henry Beaufort in England, mentioned that Branda's Greek doctor had visited Beaufort before passing into the service of Henry V, BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 16. That this doctor was identical with le Franc is suggested by the allusions of Rolando Talenti, an erstwhile member of Branda's *familia*, to his longstanding acquaintance with le Franc and their close connection with the Castiglione, TALENTI, 'Epistolary', ff. 98r-v.

⁸⁶ STOREY, R.L., 'Cardinal Beaufort's Greek Doctor', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, xxix (1985), 109-14.

⁸⁷ TALENTI, 'Epistolary', ff. 98r-v (Talentì to le Franc, early 1440s); *Inventaires Sommaires*, p. 10.

⁸⁸ GAUSSIN, P.R., 'Les Conseillers de Charles VII (1418-1461). Essai de Politologie Historique', *Francia*, x (1982), 67-130, at pp. 77-8, p. 97, p. 116; WICKERSHEIMER, E., *Dictionnaire Biographique des Médecins en France au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1936), p. 762; THOMAS, A., 'Nouveaux Documents sur Thomas Le Franc, Médecin de Charles VII, Protecteur de l'Humanisme', *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* (1911), pp. 671-6; id., 'Un document inédit sur la présence à Paris de l'humaniste Grégoire Tifernas (Novembre 1458)', *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* (1910), pp. 636-40; HAMY, E.T., 'Un médecin grec à la cour de Charles VII. Thomas de Coron, dit le Franc', *Société Française d'Histoire de la Médecine*, vii (1908), 192-205.

⁸⁹ *Dispatches with Related Documents of Milanese Ambassadors in France and Burgundy, 1450-1483*, eds. P.M. KENDALL/V. ILARDI (3 vols., Athens OH, 1970-81), i, 206. For further references to le Franc, who died in the summer of 1456, see *ibid.*, p. 209n, pp. 246-8, pp. 258-60, p. 264.

⁹⁰ FOFFANO, 'Umanisti italiani', pp. 20-1. This was the same codex Zanone had recovered after the looting of his episcopal palace in 1450, above, p. 158n. The book has survived and is today in the Vatican, B.A.V., MS Reg.lat. 1321.

the early 1470s, jointly with Guglielmo le Franc, Branda da Castiglione jr. served as Milanese ambassador at the court of Louis XI alongside his relatives Cristoforo and Arcimboldo da Castiglione.⁹¹ Having thus successfully established representatives of their interests at the French court, the Castiglione managed to protect their privileges in Normandy until well into the sixteenth century: as late as in 1550, one Gianfrancesco da Castiglione can be traced as abbot of St. Marie de Vannes in Normandy.⁹²

The establishment of the Castiglione in Normandy provides a prime example of successful dynastic politics and the effective exercise of patronage. In the 1420s, Branda di Castiglione's role as powerful mediator of Anglo-Papal relations opened the way for the expansion of his family into Normandy. In the ensuing 30 years, the Castiglione skilfully adapted to the quickly shifting power configurations at the English court. It has here been proposed that Zanone di Castiglione's activity as a mediator of contacts between Humphrey, duke of Gloucester and a number of Italian humanists may have been an attempt to achieve a rapprochement with the then ascendant duke, whom the Castiglione had previously coldshouldered, without offending their traditional ally, cardinal Beaufort. Zanone's role as a middleman between the English duke and the Italian humanists was thus apparently not motivated by the selfless objective to promote the cause of Italian humanism in England, but by the desire of the Castiglione to protect their interests in Lancastrian France. The fact that Zanone considered it opportune to adopt the role of a literary broker to win Gloucester's political support, indirectly testifies to the importance which the duke attributed to literature in the formulation of his policy. At the same time it indicates that Zanone shared Gloucester's pragmatic approach to literature, and suggests that this perception of the interrelation between literature and political action provided the common point of departure from which the English duke and the Italian bishop pursued their particular interests.

As soon as the Castiglione realised that Gloucester was no longer able to promote their interests, Zanone's enthusiasm as the duke's literary agent waned, and the Castiglione reverted to their previous collaboration with the dominant forces in English politics. Only under

⁹¹ *Dispatches*, iii, xxix; PETRUCCI, F., 'Castiglione, Branda, jr.', p. 128; MOLS, R., 'Castiglione, Branda da II', p. 1445; THOMAS, A., 'Document inédit', p. 640.

⁹² LITTA, iv, s.v. 'Castiglione di Milano', tav. i.; DESLANDES, p. 114.

the impression of renewed French advances on Normandy in 1443, did Zanone try to revive his contacts with Gloucester, when he addressed an impassioned appeal for succour to the duke. By that time, the Castiglione were already beginning to emancipate themselves from the English. Having in the course of the 1430s systematically built a strong basis of independent support in Normandy by the judicious exercise of local patronage, the Castiglione from the mid-1440s onwards sought a rapprochement with Charles VII. As a result, they weathered the French recovery of the duchy in 1450 without any major losses to the privileges they had accrued from their previous collaboration with the English and within less than a decade, the Castiglione had sufficiently consolidated their position to establish themselves as middlemen between the French king, the Curia and the Milanese court.

Zanone's activity as Gloucester's cultural agent formed but a small thread in the intricate network of contacts between England and Rome which the Castiglione had established to promote their dynastic ambitions in Lancastrian France. By comparison with the close links that bound the Castiglione with Henry Beaufort for almost three decades, and against the backdrop of the collaboration of the Castiglione with the French in the century after 1450, Zanone's brief flirtation with Gloucester in the second half of 1437 constituted but a brief, and ultimately inconsequential, episode in the history of Castiglione expansion into northern France.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

A STUDY IN FAILURE. PIERO DA MONTE, PAPAL COLLECTOR AND NUNCIO IN ENGLAND 1435 TO 1440, AND THE BACKGROUND OF HIS ACTIVITY AS MIDDLEMAN BETWEEN GLOUCESTER AND ITALIAN HUMANISTS

Alongside Zanone da Castiglione, Piero da Monte (c. 1404–1457), was the second important middleman between Gloucester and the humanist community in Italy. By contrast to Zanone, who acted as the duke's literary agent during his prolonged stays in Italy, da Monte emerged as Gloucester's cultural broker in the course of his sojourn in England between 1435 and 1440. His adaptations for the duke of original texts by Poggio Bracciolini have already been mentioned.¹ Moreover, da Monte may have recommended Tito Livio Frulovisi and Antonio Beccaria for service in Gloucester's household. Himself a member of the duke's literary circle, da Monte requested the Florentine humanist Ambrogio Traversari to send his works to Gloucester and encouraged him to correspond with the English duke. Although Gloucester was the most prominent recipient of his literary favours, he was not the only English bibliophile whom da Monte cultivated during his stay in England; his correspondence with Nicholas Bildestone, William Wells, John Whethamstede and Thomas le Franc testifies to da Monte's literary contacts with men in the middling ranks of English government and in the environs of the English court.

Like Zanone da Castiglione, da Monte was a man of the Church. After a brilliant career as a papal publicist at the Council of Basel, the trained jurist had been promoted to the papal protonotariat in 1435; simultaneously, he had been appointed papal collector and nuncio in England and Ireland. In the following five years, da Monte served as the most high-ranking permanent representative of papal interests in England. Emphasising particularly the diplomatic aspect of his assignment, the collector styled himself as defender of papal supremacy against pro-conciliar sympathies in the English government.

¹ Above, Part One, chapter seven, pp. 88–93.

Da Monte's activity as papal diplomat and his role as middleman between Gloucester and the Italian humanists have tended to be considered in isolation, and the collector's literary pursuits in England have been interpreted as a gentlemanly pastime, in which he indulged during his hours of leisure.² The present investigation integrates da Monte's activity as a mediator of contacts between Gloucester and the Italian humanists with his political action in England. The most important source for such an integrative reconstruction of da Monte's career is his voluminous epistolary, the autograph copy of which is today in the Vatican Library.³ The frequent inaccuracies, revisions and deliberate misrepresentations which characterise da Monte's letters need not be detrimental to this investigation; on the contrary: critically correlated with modern studies of Anglo-Papal relations in the latter half of the 1430s; rather, the idiosyncrasies of da Monte's account provide a key to the understanding of the collector's self-image and thus to the motivation of his action.⁴

The examination takes as its point of departure the hypothesis that da Monte's activity as literary agent formed part of his attempts to establish contacts with members of the English government. Such contacts were prerequisite for the realisation of da Monte's ambition to assume the position of central middleman between the English government and the papal court which, the collector hoped, would recommend him for further promotion at the Curia. As in the discussion of Zanone da Castiglione's role as Gloucester's middleman, the investigation focuses on the question of the advantages da Monte hoped to accrue from his cultural brokerage.

Piero da Monte was born in Venice sometime between 1400 and

² VICKERS, p. 372 observed: 'Two scholars [Gloucester and da Monte] with similar tastes had struck up a friendship based on a strong intellectual sympathy, [...] mercenary motives . . . were here absent. We can listen to the praise of da Monte without any nauseating suspicion of the reality of the sentiments expressed.' For similar assessments see SCHIRMER, pp. 37-41; WEISS, p. 24, p. 27; and J. Haller in his introduction to *Piero da Monte. Ein Gelehrter und päpstlicher Beamter*, pp. *83-4.

³ Vatican City, B.A.V., Vat.lat. 2964 (DA MONTE's Epistolary) (cited from now on as DA MONTE, 'Epistolary'). The manuscript has been edited by Johannes Haller, *Piero da Monte. Ein Gelehrter und päpstlicher Beamter des 15. Jahrhunderts. Seine Briefesammlung*, ed. J. HALLER, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, xix (Rome, 1941). Since this edition is incomplete, the following investigation is based on the original manuscript. Wherever relevant passages have been edited by Haller, reference will be made both to the MS and to HALLER.

⁴ For the alleged shortcomings of the epistolary see HALLER, pp. *45-6, pp. *50-3; pp. *75-6; SCHOFIELD, p. 90.

1404 as the youngest son of one Niccolò da Monte. Niccolò's social and professional background is uncertain; apparently, he belonged to the very small group of minor officials, non-noble merchants, and other professionals, who held a place between the *popolo* and the patriciate in the social hierarchy of Venice.⁵ Clearly, however, he was sufficiently well off to send his youngest son to Guarino da Verona's school in Venice and to finance his studies at the university of Padua, where Piero received his doctorate *in utriusque* in the summer of 1433.⁶

At Padua, da Monte was apparently a member of the local humanist coteries, most prominent among them the literary circle of the bishop of Vicenza and important patron of humanism, Pietro Miani.⁷ In his *Invectiva adversus ridiculum quendam oratorem* (c. 1430), da Monte portrayed himself as a member of an élite circle of students who shared a love for the literature of ancient Greece and Rome and filled their free time with the discussion of new currents in contemporary literature.⁸ Even in his later life, da Monte never lost his interest in the *humaniora*. During his stay in England, he made efforts to get access to rare and old copies of classical texts preserved in English monastic libraries.⁹ The Veronese humanist Antonio Beccaria and the Greek scholar George of Trebizond dedicated translations from the Greek to da Monte, and in the biographical sketches of Vespasiano da Bisticci and Flavio Biondo he is described as a bibliophile, who was well versed in classical literature.¹⁰ Despite his

⁵ KING, M.L., *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton, 1986), pp. 405–6. This group made up eight to eleven percent of the Venetian population, *ibid.*, p. 289. On da Monte's background see also ZANELLI, A., 'Pietro del Monte', *ASL*, xxxiv (1907), 47–115, 317–78, at p. 320; HALLER, pp. *10–11; RICCIARDI, R., 'Del Monte, Piero', *DBI*, xxxviii (1990), 141–6, at p. 141.

⁶ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 164r–v (to Ambrogio Traversari, October 1438), f. 208r (to Poggio, January 1440); ZANELLI, pp. 322–7; HALLER, pp. *11–6; RICCIARDI, pp. 141–2.

⁷ For da Monte's contacts with humanist circles in Padua, see HALLER, p. *22; ZANELLI, pp. 326–7; SOTTILI, A., *Studenti tedeschi e umanesimo italiano nell'Università di Padova durante il Quattrocento. I. Pietro del Monte nella società accademica padovana (1430–1433)*, *Contributi alla storia dell'Università di Padova*, 7 (Padua, 1971).

⁸ Vatican City, B.A.V., MS Vat.lat. 3194, ff. 13r–28r, 'Invectiva adversus ridiculum quendam oratorem'. The 'Invectiva', an aggressive defense of humanist studies and of his former teacher Guarino, was dedicated to da Monte's friend and mentor, Andrea Giuliano (1384–1452), a former pupil of Chrysoloras and close friend of Gasparino Barzizza and Francesco Barbaro, ZANELLI, p. 326; HALLER, pp. *19–*20.

⁹ WEISS, pp. 25–6.

¹⁰ MONFASANI, J., (ed.), *Collectanea Trapezuntia: Texts, Documents and Bibliographies of*

humanist training and interests, da Monte was, however, mainly esteemed by his contemporaries as an adept theologian and jurist whose lasting international fame rested on his *Repertorium Utriusque Iuris*, a monumental legal compendium which da Monte compiled in the early 1450s.¹¹

Da Monte combined thus an early education and continuing interest in the *studia humanitatis* with a professional training in jurisprudence. This combination of *studia humaniora* and *studia utiliora* (da Monte), which he had adopted at his father's recommendation, seems to have borne its first fruits during da Monte's final years at Padua when he was repeatedly entrusted with the composition of public orations for the university.¹² After he had taken his degree, da Monte embarked on an ecclesiastical career and soon made a name for himself as a publicist. In November 1433, he joined the council of Basel as speaker of the pro-papal *deputatio pacis*.¹³ In July 1434, he was appointed as orator of the pro-papal embassy to Florence and Rome that was to negotiate the liberation of the papal nephew Francesco Condulmer from his Roman captivity.¹⁴ In the course of this mission, da Monte seems to have attracted the attention of the future papal chamberlain, Lodovico Scarampo, who was to become his mentor and protector.¹⁵ Late in 1434, barely a year after he had left university, da Monte received a call to the Curia. Soon after—he was in his early thirties at the time—da Monte was promoted to the papal protonotariat, a rank that gave him protocollary precedence over a bishop.¹⁶ Obviously, da Monte was an emerging star at the Curia, whose eloquence and unconditional loyalty to the papal

George of Trebizond, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, xxv (Binghamton N.Y., 1984), pp. 311–2; KRISTELLER, *Iter Italicum. A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and other Libraries* (6 vols. to date, London and Leiden, 1963–), ii, 47, 193; DA BISTICCI, i, 269; BIONDO, F., *Flavii Biondi Forliviensis Italia Illustrata* (Basel, Froben, 1531), p. 374.

¹¹ Ibid.; DA BISTICCI, i, 270; QUAGLIONI, D., *Pietro da Monte a Roma. La tradizione del 'Repertorium Utriusque Iuris' (c. 1453). Genesi e diffusione della letteratura giuridico-politica in età umanistica*, Studi e fonti per la storia dell'Università di Roma, iii (Rome, 1984).

¹² ZANELLI, pp. 324–6; SOTTILI, pp. 44–50, and TOURNOY, G., 'Un nuovo testo del periodo padovano di Piero da Monte', *Quaderni per la storia dell'università di Padova*, vii (1975), 67–72.

¹³ ZANELLI, pp. 330–33; HALLER, pp. *24–35.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. *35–7; ZANELLI, pp. 333–5; RICCIARDI, p. 142.

¹⁵ HALLER, pp. *39–40; ZANELLI, p. 329.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 329; HALLER, pp. *37–40; RICCIARDI, p. 142.

cause seemed to predestine him for a brilliant career in the service of Eugenius IV.¹⁷

Simultaneously with his promotion to the protonotariat, da Monte was appointed as papal collector and nuncio in England and Ireland.¹⁸ This office combined the administration of papal finances in England with care for the routine aspects of Anglo-Papal diplomacy.¹⁹ Apparently da Monte had little patience for the financial side of his assignment. Writing to his friend, Ermolao Barbaro, he commented in spring 1438:

rem quidem hanc pecuniariam ego parvi facio atque contemno neque solius colligendo pecunie causa hic esse ullatenus vellem. Alius mihi est animus, mens alia, diversa intentio. Si enim angusti animi esse hominem amantem pecunias Cicero noster scribit, quo loco eum ponemus qui pecuniaria negocia tractat, pecuniis exigendis invigilat et circa illarum questum ad alterius commodum se totum exercet? Vilis profecto res est et honesto viro per ac presertim Christi sacerdote indigna, dicente apostolo: "Nemo militans deo implicet se negociis secularibus". Quod autem negotium potest esse secularis, quam pecunias colligere, data et accepta quotidie computare, nummos ad numerum et pondus recipere et in his dies, menses, immo annos plurimos consumere ut potius perdere?²⁰

Instead, da Monte focused on the diplomatic aspects of his commission. Having previously excelled as a pro-papal publicist at the Council of Basel, the collector vied for the same role at the English court.²¹ In his first letter from England to Lodovico Scarampo, da Monte criticised the fact that although Eugenius IV had sent special envoys

¹⁷ BLACK, A., *Monarchy and Community. Political Ideas in the Later Conciliar Controversy 1430–1450*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, ser. iii, 2 (Cambridge, 1970), p. 88.

¹⁸ HALLER, pp. 187–90; *Calendar of Entries in the Papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters*, ed. W.H. BLISS/J.A. TWEMLOW (14 vols./London, 1893–1960) (cited from now on as *CPL*), viii, 282; RICCIARDI, p. 142.

¹⁹ RICHARD, P., 'Origines des nonciatures permanentes. La représentation pontificale au XV^e siècle (1450–1513)', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, vii (1906), 52–70, at pp. 54–60; GRIFFI, P., *De Officio Collectoris in Regno Angliae*, ed. M. MONACO (Rome, 1973) pp. 170–222; LUNT, W.E., *Financial Relations of the Papacy with England, 1327–1534*, *Studies in Anglo-Papal Relations during the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp. 1–24; BLET, P., *Histoire de la représentation diplomatique du Saint Siège* (Vatican City, 1982), pp. 150–8; HARVEY, pp. 74–6 and SCHUCHARD, C., *Die päpstlichen Kollektoren im späten Mittelalter*, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, xci (Tübingen, 2000).

²⁰ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 154r, HALLER, p. 60; ZANELLI, pp. 338–9.

²¹ BLACK, p. 100; HALLER, pp. *46–7.

to other countries in northern Europe to defend the papal cause against the increasingly secessionist tendencies of the Council of Basel, no such ambassadors had been dispatched to England, where Henry VI's government was steering an uneasy course between adherence to Rome and flirtation with conciliar positions. Da Monte then volunteered to go beyond his duties as a nuncio and fight conciliar sympathies in England.²²

To understand da Monte's motivation for this re-interpretation of his assignment, it is helpful to consider the exact terminology the collector used with reference to his mission in England. His official title was that of a papal nuncio. Yet in his letter to Scarampo of autumn 1435, in which he first requested an extension of his diplomatic prerogative, da Monte designated the papal envoys to other countries, on whose model he wished to mould his own role in England, as "legatos".²³ A year later, da Monte openly used the word "legatione" to describe his own assignment in England.²⁴ Apparently the collector hoped to extend his limited prerogative as a nuncio, who was charged with routine matters and acted as a mere instrument of the papal will, to that of a legate, who was entrusted with

²² DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 92v (early autumn 1435), HALLER, pp. 8-9, "Verum et doleo et admiror, quod cum legatorum qui ad alios principes designati sunt, nomina nobis relata sint, nulla de hoc potentissime rege mentio habita est. Qui tamen, cum de Romana ecclesia bene meritus sit, non videtur contemnendus, aut inter postremos habendus. Quare aut legatos ad hunc quoque principem mittendos esse censeo, aut, si pontifici visum fuerit, id munus mihi demandandum. Quamquam enim cetera mihi desint que res tam ardua videtur requirere, fidem tamen et diligentia polliceor. Quibus in rebus nemini cedere stat sententia. Et quoniam pro singulari in me benevolentia tua dignitatis mee patronus ac fautor semper fuisti, potes autem apud pontificem quantum vis, nihil vero vis, nisi quod honestum est et rei ecclesiastice conducit: te oro ac deprecor, ut hoc negotii mihi demandare facias. Id autem si tua opera tuaque diligentia factum fuerit, ad immortalia in me beneficia tua magnus profectus cumulus accedet." On the English attitude towards the Council and Eugenius IV during those years see ZELFELDER and SCHOFIELD, *passim*; HELMRATH, J., *Das Basler Konzil 1431-1449. Forschungsstand und Probleme*, Kölner Historische Abhandlungen xxxii, (Cologne and Vienna, 1987), pp. 224-31; HARVEY, 149-83.

²³ Vatican City, A.S.V., RV 373 (register of papal bulls), f. 177v, printed by HALLER, p. 187. "Apostolice sedis nuncius ac fructuum reddituum et proventuum camere apostolice debitorum . . . collectoris" and above, footnote no. 22.

²⁴ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 107r (to Ermolao Barbaro, September 1436), HALLER, p. 18, "Ipse pontifex cum quid arduum ac laboriosum pro pace et quiete ecclesie ac dignitate sua agendum occurrit, illico memor est mei et nemine monente scit me in hoc regno eius fungi legatione. Tunc praecepit, imperat et humeris meis quemque onera imponit, meosque labores sibi et ecclesie fructuosos esse cognoscit; quod ego non invitus sed lubens gaudensque suscipio."

politically sensitive negotiations and acted as a vicar of the pope.²⁵

Although the distinction between nuncios and legates was becoming increasingly blurred in the course of the fifteenth century, there still existed some fundamental differences between the two offices.²⁶ Thus the legates, by contrast to the nuncios, continued to be recruited almost exclusively from among the ranks of the cardinals.²⁷ Da Monte's aspirations to higher ecclesiastical dignities were no secret to his contemporaries.²⁸ Portraying da Monte in his *Librum Veritatum*, Thomas Gascoigne asserted:

magister Petrus de Monte, artium magister et legum doctor, superbus lumbardus valde, qui recedens ab Anglia cum innumerabili thesauro . . . juravit per corpus Christi . . . "quod papa Eugenius nunquam haberet illas pecunias collectas, nisi prius mitteret sibi bullas ipsum Petrum fore archiepiscopum Mediolanensem."²⁹

Vespasiano da Bisticci hinted in barely veiled terms at the collector's ambition for the cardinalate; and after da Monte's premature death in 1457, rumours began to circulate at the Curia that his demise had been precipitated by the news that he had once again been passed over in the promotions to consistory.³⁰ Therefore it is

²⁵ For a definition of the respective functions of nuncios and legates see SCHMUTZ, R.A., 'Medieval Papal Representatives: Legates, Nuncios, and Judges-Delegates', in STRAYER, J.R./QUELLER D.E. (eds.), *Studia Gratiana*, xv (1972), 443–63, at p. 458.

²⁶ RICHARD, pp. 57–9, p. 61. See also QUELLER, D.E., *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton, 1967), pp. 1–59 and FIGUEIRA, R.C., 'The Classification of Medieval Papal Legates in the *Liber Extra*', *AHP*, xxi (1983), 211–28.

²⁷ SCHMUTZ, p. 456, claims that theoretically, ecclesiastical rank was not important for a prelate's appointment as a legate; yet the lists of legates given by RICHARD, pp. 63–4, BLET, 159–70 and ERNST, F., 'Über Gesandtschaftswesen und Diplomatie an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, xxxiii (1950), 64–95, at p. 93, demonstrate, that *de facto* the majority of the legates appointed to northern Europe between 1387 and 1447 were either cardinals or archbishops.

²⁸ HALLER, pp. *106–7.

²⁹ GASCOIGNE, T., *Loci e Libro Veritatum*, ed. J.E. THOROLD ROGERS (Oxford, 1881), pp. 124–5, see also *ibid.*, p. 123.

³⁰ DA BISTICCI, i, 270, "Fu più volte per venire alla dignità del cardinalato, ma parte per invidia, per essere istimato da troppo, parte ancora perchè preventivo dalla morte, quando era venuto in conditione da poterlo conseguire. Et così va la felicità di questo mondo, che sempre, quando gli uomini credono pigliare qualche frutto delle loro fatiche, et la morte vi sopravviene, et si quello arà fatto non arà fatto per onore di Dio, aspettandone merito da lui et non dal mondo, invano si sarà afaticato, e masime per la propria sua eccellenzia, e none per il onore di Dio, perchè i più sono accecati, e non vegono lume, come fu meser Piero in alcuna parte, sperando più negli onori del mondo non si doveva, e none nello eterno Idio come doveva . . . La sua fine non fu come sarebbe suta, s'egli si fusse più volto all'onipotente Idio non fece, preventivo dalla morte fu subita e none aspettata, ch'è pieno de

here proposed that da Monte tried unofficially to assume the function of a papal legate in England in the hope that his services as a self-appointed defender of papal interests against pro-conciliar sympathies in the English government would, eventually, be rewarded with the Red Hat.³¹

The problem was that da Monte lacked an official mandate; for although Eugenius IV in 1436 extended his faculties until they were practically equivalent to those of a legate, da Monte formally remained a nuncio.³² In that function he had no access to the type of classified information from Rome that would have made him an interesting contact person for the leading members of Henry VI's government. Without such contacts at the English court, in turn, the collector was unable to channel the sort of data from England to the Curia that would have recommended him to Eugenius IV. To solve this dilemma, da Monte adopted two strategies. First, he bluffed. In his reports on the political situation in England which he sent to Rome at regular intervals, he pretended to be on close terms with the dominant forces in English government.³³ In his letters to members of

pericoli." Compare also a 15th century marginalia in Biblioteca Capitolare di San Martino, Lucca, Cod. 224 (DA MONTE, P. 'De summi pontificis potestate') f. 305v, cf. PASTOR, L.v., *History of the Popes* (40 vols., English edition, London, 1891-1953), ii, 56n, "[Petrus de Monte] fuit vir doctissimus et reputatus in curia et episcopus Brixienensis, compilator famosi repertorii et approximante semel tempore quo papa Eugenius 4^{us} erat facturus promotionem cardinalium quod crearetur cardinalis et tantorum virorum fide fretus gerebat ne intrinsecus pro cardinali nec uspiam verebatur, imo paraverat in secreto omnia necessaria hiis qui promoveretur. Sed quoniam in collegio cardinalium erat tunc D. Petrus Barbus venetus [. . .] vir imbutus moribus curiae et agilibus sagacissimus qui sub umbra Eugenii patris sui in cardinalem promotus rivalem non patiebatur et praesertim istum Petrum compatriotam et qui ob eius scientiam facile honore praecessisset unde verebatur quod ipso creato cardinali deficeret Petro favor Venetorum et voluntate adeo operatus est quod iste non obtinuit et facta promotione aliorum cardinalium remansit delusus quo factum fuit ut subito iste D. Petrus prae nimio dolore cordis incideret in passionem mortalem et delusionem tantam impatientie corde corrodens vixit quadriduo et dolore mortuus est."

³¹ In general terms such a connection between da Monte's self-fashioning as papal publicist against pro-conciliar sympathies and his aspirations to the cardinalate has already been proposed by HALLER, pp. *53-4.

³² Ibid., pp. *46-7. Da Monte's ambiguous status as a nuncio with extensive diplomatic powers was typical of that of the papal collectors/nuncios of the later Middle Ages, see RICHARD, 57.

³³ See for instance his claim to close relations with Cardinal Beaufort, DA MONTE, 'Epistolary' f. 123v (to Eugenius IV, February 1437), HALLER, p. 38 and Henry VI, ibid., f. 107r-v (to Scarampo, 1436), HALLER, pp. 19-20, f. 124r-v (to Poggio, 1437), HALLER, pp. 38-9. The comparison of a letter to Beaufort which da Monte presented in his epistolary, ibid., ff. 182r-183r (July 1439), HALLER, pp. 105-8,

the English administration, on the other hand, the collector suggested that he commanded pervasive influence at the Curia.³⁴

Second, da Monte tried, by the judicious exercise of patronage, to build a network of informers and contact persons in Rome and in the environs of the English court. How important he considered the continued support of Lodovico Scarampo at the Curia is suggested by da Monte's gift of a horse and several expensive bedspreads to the papal official.³⁵ Ermolao Barbaro, a friend from student days and a colleague in the papal protonotariat, received two beds, several bedspreads and a piece of cloth from da Monte.³⁶ To Poggio Bracciolini, the apparent head of the English desk in the papal secretariat, da Monte expedited a lace bonnet and various other luxury items for his young wife and announced his wish to act as godfather to any future children of the couple.³⁷ In England, da Monte promised to support the supplication at the Curia of Gilbert Kymer, Gloucester's personal physician, and in order to win the favours of the royal secretary, Thomas Bekynton, the collector tried to obtain a personal letter from Eugenius IV that commended Bekynton's services for the Church.³⁸ Da Monte freely admitted to the strategic purpose of these favours. In April 1439 he wrote to his friend Bartolomeo Zabarella:

with a contemporary copy of the original letter he had sent to the English cardinal, Vatican City, B.A.V., MS Vat.lat. 5221, ff. 132r–133r, demonstrates that in his epistolary, da Monte replaced the formal *vos* in his address to Beaufort by the familiar *tu*. The reverent tone of da Monte's original appeal to Cardinal Beaufort was replaced in the revised version by the discourse of friendship. This suggests that da Monte thus tried to pretend to better connections with the leading men in English politics than he actually enjoyed.

³⁴ Da Monte suggested that he had immediate access to information from the Curia and from Eugenius IV, *ibid.*, f. 152r (to John Kemp, April 1438), HALLER, p. 55, f. 186r (to John Lowe, August 1439), HALLER, p. 111, and intimated that his opinion carried weight with Eugenius IV, *ibid.*, f. 178v (to John Ayscough, July, 1439), HALLER, p. 99, f. 223r (to Andrew Holes, March 1440), HALLER, p. 148.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 92v (August 1435), HALLER, p. 9, f. 108v (1436), HALLER, p. 20, ff. 110v–111r (November 1436), HALLER, p. 24, f. 114r (November 1436), HALLER, p. 26, f. 125r (August 1437).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 115r (1436), HALLER, p. 26, f. 155r (April, 1438), HALLER, p. 62, f. 230v (31 May 1440).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 118r–v (1436/7), f. 124r–v (1437), f. 173r (April 1439), printed by WALSER, pp. 445–8. On Poggio's role in the papal secretariat see below, Part Three, chapter nineteen, pp. 252–3.

³⁸ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', ff. 129r–130r (to Kymer, late 1437); see also below, p. 187; HALLER, p. *74.

Sunt in hoc regno prelati multi ac principes, nobiles quoque et insignes viri quibuscum familiarissime vivo. His obsequi, his morem gerere, cum aliquid apud curiam mea opera impetrare se posse confidunt, cur reprobandum putas? Redduntur imprimis ob hanc meam in eos gratitudinem erga pontificis devotionem ac reverentiam firmiores, me quoque et libentius suscipiunt et attentius audiunt et maioribus ubique favoribus prosecuntur, quo fit ut rebus pontificis melius possim succurrere.³⁹

Clearly, the collector perceived his role of procurer of curial favours and exotic luxury goods from northern Europe as a means to compensate for his lack of authority and as a preliminary measure to facilitate his action as self-appointed papal legate and mediator between the papal court and the English government, that, he hoped, would ultimately earn him a promotion to consistory. This interlocking of different levels of brokerage may also have informed da Monte's activity as a middleman between Gloucester and the Italian humanists.

For an assessment of da Monte's cultural brokerage on Gloucester's behalf it is necessary, first, to reconstruct the evolution of the collector's relations with the leading members of Henry VI's government during his stay in England. The evidence from his dispatches to Rome from 1435 to 1440 suggests that in the first eighteen months of his English mission, da Monte sought to win the favour of Cardinal Beaufort. In a letter to Eugenius IV of spring 1436 the collector recommended that the pope should confirm the English proposals for provision to seven episcopal sees which had recently fallen vacant.⁴⁰ The candidates for these sees were, with one exception, clients of Beaufort.⁴¹ Da Monte's epistolary does not contain any dispatches to Eugenius IV for the period from spring 1436 to early 1437, nor can his attitude towards individual members of Henry VI's government during these months be reconstructed from other sources. Apparently, however, the collector persevered in his pro-Beaufort course; for in one of his most ambitious pieces of writing, a vivid account of the murder of king James I of Scotland, which he addressed

³⁹ Ibid., f. 171r, HALLER, p. 89, pp. *77–9.

⁴⁰ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 105r–v (spring 1436), HALLER, pp. 15–7, ff. 109r–110r (1436), HALLER, pp. 21–2, pp. *68–71; ZANELLI, pp. 438–9.

⁴¹ Da Monte supported the provision of Thomas Rodburn (Ely), Thomas Cheriton (Bangor), William Alnwick (Lincoln), Thomas Brouns (Norwich), William Wells (Rochester), William Lyndwood (St. David's) and Robert Gilbert (London), HALLER, p. 16; SCHOFIELD, p. 92; GRIFFITHS, pp. 103–4. Apart from Cheriton, all of these candidates were Beaufort's men, HARRISS, pp. 271–3.

to Eugenius IV in February 1437, da Monte explicitly identified Beaufort as his informant and underscored the powerful cardinal's trustworthiness.⁴² Seven months later the collector thanked Lodovico Scarampo for having used his influence with Eugenius IV to support the provision of Lewis of Luxemburg, another Beaufort candidate, with the see of Ely.⁴³

Apparently da Monte tried to keep up with the shifts of power at the head of Henry VI's government. His oft-cited favourable assessment of Henry VI's intellectual maturity suggests that he misinterpreted the re-organisation of English government of November 1437 as a confirmation of Henry VI's authority and that the collector briefly pinned his hopes on the powerful assertion of the young king's personal rule.⁴⁴ Da Monte seems soon to have realised his mistake; in a dispatch to Eugenius IV of May 1438, he presented the king as a well-meaning but politically impotent figure.⁴⁵ In its structure and use of narrative techniques, this dispatch in which da Monte described the reception of an embassy from the Council at Basel at the English court closely resembled his account of the murder of James I, and it may indeed have been conceived as its companionpiece. Yet, whereas the earlier communication had endeavoured to throw a favourable light on Beaufort, da Monte now implicated the cardinal and his ally, archbishop Kemp, as crypto-conciliarists. Meanwhile, Henry Chichele and Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, whom the collector seems previously to have largely ignored, were portrayed as courageous defenders of papal supremacy.⁴⁶

The causes of da Monte's change of allegiance from Beaufort to Gloucester in 1437/8 remain uncertain. Probably the collector, as a propagator of pure monarchy, disapproved of Beaufort's *de facto* leadership in the polity of Henry VI.⁴⁷ Probably, da Monte felt that his

⁴² DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', ff. 119v–123v, HALLER, pp. 30–38.

⁴³ Ibid., ff. 127v–129r (to Scarampo, November, 1437), HALLER, p. 43.

⁴⁴ Ibid., f. 128r–v, HALLER pp. 43–5 and pp. *73–5; SCHOFIELD, pp. 93–4; GRIFFITHS, p. 235; WATTS, p. 104.

⁴⁵ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 155v, HALLER, p. 63, f., 156v, HALLER, p. 65.

⁴⁶ Ibid., ff. 155v–158v, HALLER, pp. 62–70 and above, Part One, chapter 7, p. 82.

⁴⁷ For da Monte's position on monarchy compare Rundle's discussion of the collector's defense of papal supremacy which he addressed to the Council of Basel from England (preserved in Vatican City, B.A.V., Barb.lat. 843 ff. 198–233v and Vat.lat. 4905) and which, according to Rundle, represents a defense of pure monarchy both in the ecclesiastical and in the secular sphere, RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 172–6.

services were not sufficiently appreciated by Beaufort, and hoped that his offer of independent contacts with the Curia would find a more gracious reception with Gloucester, whose relations with Rome were difficult and whose literary interests would have offered da Monte an easy point of contact.⁴⁸ Once the change had been effected, however, it was apparently permanent. After May 1438 da Monte's contacts with Beaufort and his satellites seem to have been characterised by glacial reverence.⁴⁹ The collector's investiture, in 1438, with the rectory of Ivychurch in the diocese of Canterbury, and his endeavours to further Gloucester's interest at the Curia, on the other hand, suggest his warming relations with Chichele and Gloucester.⁵⁰

Simultaneously with his change into the duke's camp, da Monte emerged as a middleman between Gloucester and the Italian humanists.⁵¹ His background in the *studia humanitatis* and his continuing contacts with the humanist community permitted the collector to select appropriate texts for the duke, and broker contacts with humanists who were willing to work in Gloucester's household. In the late summer of 1438, the collector may have recommended the Veronese humanist Antonio Beccaria as successor to Tito Livio Frulovisi as Gloucester's "poeta et orator".⁵² Writing to the Florentine humanist

⁴⁸ For indications that da Monte felt his services were not sufficiently appreciated by Beaufort and his satellites see his letter to the cardinal's client, Andrew Holes, in which he accused Holes of arrogance, DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', ff. 222v–223r (March 1440), HALLER, pp. 147–8.

⁴⁹ Ibid. and da Monte's letter to Beaufort (July 1439), Vat.lat. 5221, ff. 132r–133r.

⁵⁰ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 172v (to Roberto Cavalcanti, April 1439), HALLER, pp. 91–2. Compare also Eugenius's favourable letter to Gloucester of October 1438, A.S.V., Reg.Vat. 367, f. 119r, printed in HALLER, pp. 221–2; HARVEY, p. 98.

⁵¹ SABBADINI, 'Frulovisi', p. 60 proposed that as early as in 1435/6, da Monte may have brokered the contact between Gloucester and Frulovisi. Sabbadini's proposal has since been uncritically accepted by most scholars, see e.g. WEISS, p. 26, p. 41 and id., 'Codici umanistici in Inghilterra I', *GSLI*, cxxxi (1954), 386–95, at p. 387; SAMMUT, p. 17. It needs, however, to be stressed that there exists no evidence for any connection between da Monte and Frulovisi beyond the fact that in the summer of 1439, da Monte made an allusion to his longstanding friendship with Frulovisi, and that a year later, he grudgingly undertook efforts to extricate Frulovisi from an *imbroglio* with the English *curialis* John Ghele, DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 176r–v, ff. 231r–232r, printed by SABBADINI, R., 'Tito Livio Frulovisi umanista del sec. XV', *GSLI*, ciii (1934), 55–81, at pp. 74–9. Prior to 1438, all references to da Monte's activity as Gloucester's middleman must, therefore, remain speculative.

⁵² WEISS, R., 'Per la biografia di Antonio Beccaria in Inghilterra', *GSLI*, cx (1931), 344–6, at p. 345. Weiss's arguments for da Monte's role as mediator between Gloucester and Beccaria are, however, no less speculative than those of Sabbadini with reference to the da Monte/Frulovisi connection. On Beccaria's background and his career in Gloucester's service see also VICKERS, pp. 377–8; SCHIRMER, pp.

Ambrogio Traversari in autumn of that year, da Monte described Gloucester as the model of a lettered prince; he reported that a letter by Traversari which he had read to the duke had found a favourable reception, and closed his letter with the request:

te oro, ut aliquem ex hisce libris tuis tanto principi transmittas simulque ad eum litteras scribas, quas si mihi dari iusseris, ego eas illi reddam curaboque munus ornare verbis faciamque te tanto principi carissimum.⁵³

About the same time, da Monte embarked on his adaptation of Poggio's *De Avaritia* for Gloucester; a year later he presented the duke with his interpretation of Poggio's position in the Scipio/Caesar controversy.⁵⁴

The coincidence between da Monte's political change of allegiance from Beaufort to Gloucester late in 1437 and his emergence as a middleman between the duke and the Italian humanists suggests that the central motives for da Monte's cultural brokerage on Gloucester's behalf were, first, the wish to win the favour of the duke as an important representative of Henry VI's administration and, second, the desire to strengthen Gloucester's position in his struggle with Cardinal Beaufort. The collector's activity as literary mediator seems thus to have been closely related to his attempts to consolidate his standing as self-appointed legate and middleman between the English government and Eugenius IV.

This hypothesis is confirmed by the results of an examination of da Monte's literary contacts with other Englishmen apart from Gloucester. In October 1436 the collector asked William Wells, a Benedictine abbot whose promotion to the see of Rochester he had supported in September 1436, for a copy of a theological tract.⁵⁵ Some time in 1436/7, da Monte requested a volume of works by Seneca from the dean of Salisbury, Nicholas Bildestone.⁵⁶ In October

36–7; WEISS, *Humanism in England*, pp. 45–6; VASOLI, C., 'Beccaria, Antonio', *DBI*, vii (Rome, 1965), 447–8; SAMMUT, pp. 21–2, pp. 157–65.

⁵³ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', ff. 166v–167r, HALLER, p. 83; SCHIRMER, pp. 45–6; WEISS, pp. 25–6; SAMMUT, p. 17.

⁵⁴ Above, Part One, chapter seven, pp. 88–93.

⁵⁵ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 109r, HALLER, p. 20; HARVEY, M., 'John Whethamstede, the Pope and the General Council', in BARRON, C.M./HARPER-BILL, C. (eds.), *Church in Pre-Reformation Society*, pp. 108–122, at p. 119. For da Monte's correspondence with Wells see DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', ff. 103r–104v (1436), ff. 108v–109r (September 1436), 118v–119r (November 1436), ff. 147r–149r, HALLER, pp. 49–51. On Wells' promotion to Rochester, GRIFFITHS, pp. 103–4.

⁵⁶ DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', ff. 117v–118r.

1437, the collector sent works by Plutarch to the abbot of St Albans, John Whethamstede. Two years later, he sent Whethamstede a copy of his own *De Vitiorum*, asking him in return for permission to transcribe a collection of works by Josephus in the monastic library of St Albans.⁵⁷ Da Monte's contacts with Frulovisi and Antonio Beccaria during the late 1430s have already been mentioned.⁵⁸ Moreover, the collector, from autumn 1437 onwards, cultivated close contacts with the physician Gilbert Kymer, and in August 1440 he requested the Greek physician Thomas le Franc to return several medical tracts to him.⁵⁹

Da Monte's letters to these men were rife with classical allusions; their elegant *parlando* suggests that the collector was on close personal terms with his addressees and that his friendships with these men were mainly based on a shared interest in literature and the *studia humanitatis*. Yet da Monte's friends in England did not live in a political vacuum; rather they were all more or less closely connected with the most prominent figures in English government. Wells, Bildestone, and le Franc were associated with Beaufort; Whethamstede, Beccaria, Frulovisi and Kymer, on the other hand, belonged to Gloucester's circle.⁶⁰

Significantly, the evolution of da Monte's seemingly private friendships with these men in the environs of the great echoed the development of his relations with their masters. The collector's friendships with Wells, Bildestone and le Franc were all established before winter 1437/8, that is in the period during which da Monte was still vying for Beaufort's favour. Whethamstede, Beccaria and Kymer, on the other hand, only gained profile as friends of da Monte after the

⁵⁷ Ibid., f. 125r-v, f. 189r-v see also WEISS, R., 'Piero del Monte, John Whethamstede, and the Library of St. Albans Abbey', *EHR*, lx (1945), 399-406, at pp. 404-6 and, for a revision of Weiss' assessment of Whethamstede, RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 87-101.

⁵⁸ Above, p. 184.

⁵⁹ For da Monte's letter to Kymer see above, p. 180n. For his contacts with le Franc see DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 234r.

⁶⁰ On Bildestone's career and lifelong association with Beaufort see EMDEN, A.B., *Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (3 vols. Oxford, 1957-9), s.v. 'Bildeston, Nicholas'; HARRISS, ad indicem. On Wells and his contacts with Beaufort, ibid., p. 272; EMDEN, s.v. 'Wells, William'. For le Franc, see above, chapter thirteen, pp. 168-70. On Whethamstede's career and his connections with Gloucester, *DNB*, xx, s.v. 'Whethamstede, John'; VICKERS, *passim*; SCHIRMER, pp. 73-9, WEISS, pp. 30-8 and id., 'Piero del Monte'. Frulovisi, Beccaria, and Kymer were *familiares* of the duke, above, *passim*.

collector had passed into Gloucester's camp.⁶¹ Clearly, da Monte's seemingly private, literary friendships were thus dictated by political considerations and conceived as a means to consolidate his standing with the men in the middling ranks of government and in the immediate surroundings of the important players in English politics. This is exemplified by da Monte's action in the summer of 1439.

In spring 1439 Felix V was elected at Basel; in response to the schism da Monte mounted a large-scale publicity campaign against the Council.⁶² In particular, the collector hoped for the support of Cardinal Beaufort. He therefore tried to muster the assistance of the cardinal's chancellor, Nicholas Bildestone, with whom he had hitherto mainly exchanged manuscripts of classical authors. "Scio enim", Da Monte wrote to Bildestone in July 1439,

licet sinodorum auctoritate plurimum faveas, te tamen has turbationes, hec scandala plurimum detestari, ex quibus scissuram ac divisionem habemus pre foribus. Cui enim talia non displicerent, is cum iniquis illis et perfidis hominibus esset merito deputandus . . . Ego vero qui te ac cogitationes et sententias tuas, intus, ut aiunt, et in cute cognosco, neque minus ferventem illam devotionem, quam ad dei ecclesiam geris, hec nephanda opera a te damnari nequaquam dubito. Per has enim mutuas collisiones bellumque plusquam civile pacem quietem ac tranquillitatem perdidimus. Verendumque permaxime nobis est, ne omnis ecclesiastica dignitas, potestas et auctoritas conculcetur atque conteratur. Nam ut sapienter a Cicerone nostro dictum memini: nullum periculosius bellum est, quam cum intra muros pugnatum. Itaque te decet tanquam bonum virum et Christi sacerdotem pro viribus ex adverso consurgere, et reverendissimo Cardinali Anglie apud quem magna est auctoritas tua, omni studio persuadere, ut hic gravissimis malis scandalisque occurrat, salubremque medicinam huic cancroso vulnere adhibeat, ne serpendo universum ecclesie corpus inficiat.⁶³

⁶¹ The first letter to le Franc in da Monte's epistolary dates from 31 July 1439; DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', ff. 183v–185r, HALLER, pp. 109–10, its contents suggest, however, that the contacts between the two men dated further back. For their further correspondence see *ibid.*, f. 189r (17 September 1439), HALLER, pp. 119–20, ff. 233v–234r (14 July 1440).

⁶² See his letters *ibid.*, f. 178v (to William Ayscough, July 1439), HALLER, pp. 98–9; ff. 181r–182r, f. 185r (to Vincent Clement, July/August 1439), HALLER, pp. 104–5; ff. 182r–183r (to Beaufort, July 1439), HALLER, pp. 105–8, pp. 110–1; f. 183r–v, (to Bildestone, July 1439), HALLER, pp. 108–9; ff. 183v–185r, f. 189r (to le Franc, July/September, 1439), HALLER, pp. 109–10, pp. 119–20; f. 185v (to John Lowe, August 1439), HALLER, p. 111; ff. 188v–189r, (to John O'Heyne, September 1439), HALLER, pp. 117–9.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, ff. 183r–v, HALLER, pp. 108–9.

Da Monte here astutely employed references to his private friendship with Bildestone ("ego qui te ac cogitationes et sententias intus . . . et in cute cognosco") and their shared literary interests ("Cicero noster"), to call in Bildestone's support for his own political objectives.

The same pattern can be observed in da Monte's literary contacts at the Curia. On 31 January 1440 the collector completed his contribution to the Scipio/Caesar-controversy in which he defended Poggio's position against that of Guarino.⁶⁴ Unable to find a reliable messenger, he did not immediately dispatch a copy of the work to Poggio; what he did send, however, was a short note which had apparently originally been intended as an enclosure to his literary present for Poggio.⁶⁵ In that note, da Monte asked the powerful papal secretary to obtain, in his name, a personal favour from Eugenius IV for the royal secretary, Thomas Bekynton. "Facies enim", da Monte wrote,

mihi quiddam gratissimum, et quod huius episcopi [Bekynton] animi mirum in modum ad res pontificis inflammabit. In me quoque munificentior erit, si intelliget ipsius gratitudinem et caritatem notam esse pontifici atque ab eo laudari et commendari . . . Tantus enim apud istos ero, quantum me pontifex et esse et haberi voluerit. Itaque si interdum me suis litteris commendaverit, aut non indignum sua gratia dixerit, vel simile aliquid scripserit, profecto meum tollet ad sidera nomen plurimumque emolumenti ad rem meam familiarem addiciet.⁶⁶

These lines echoed da Monte's comment on the importance of patronage/brokerage for the promotion of his political objectives in his letter to Bartolomeo Zabarella of spring 1439.⁶⁷ This suggests that da Monte's activity as mediator of cultural contacts between Italy and England was informed by the same motive that determined his decision to procure trinkets for Poggio's young wife, buy a fancy horse for the magnificent Scarampo, or seek papal favours for his English friends: the desire to build a reliable network of contacts at the Curia and in English government. Gloucester was undoubtedly the most prominent member of that network in England; ultimately, however, he was only one possible contact person in the English government

⁶⁴ Ibid., ff. 207r–218r; above, Part One, chapter seven, pp. 90–93.

⁶⁵ For da Monte's explanation of the delay of his dispatch of the Scipio/Caesar tract see *ibid.*, ff. 218r–219r (22 February 1440), WALSER, pp. 450–2; for his note to Poggio of 31 January 1440 *ibid.*, f. 200v, WALSER, pp. 449–50.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Cited above, p. 180.

on whose support da Monte depended for the successful exercise of his function as self-appointed papal legate in England.

Da Monte's plan by his activity as unofficial papal legate to recommend himself for promotion to consistory miscarried. This failure was due to a combination of factors. As previous scholars have pointed out, the central problem in Anglo-Papal relations during the 1430s was the search for a settlement of the English war with France.⁶⁸ Arriving in the immediate aftermath of the congress of Arras, the failure of which was blamed in England on the alleged pro-French sympathies of the papal mediator, Cardinal Albergati, da Monte could not have picked a worse time to set himself up as a representative of papal interests in England.⁶⁹

Despite the tensions between England and the papacy in 1435/6, there was apparently little danger of an English break with Rome in favour of Basel; for England, the Council was interesting only in as far as it offered an alternative forum for negotiations with France and Burgundy; as the council became increasingly dominated by French and Burgundian interests in 1434/5 it lost its attraction for the English.⁷⁰ By choosing the defense of papal authority against pro-conciliarist tendencies in England as his main field of action, da Monte thus focused on a marginal and relatively unproblematic aspect of Anglo-Papal diplomacy. His exertions in that area therefore failed to make him indispensable as a mediator between England and Rome.⁷¹

Besides, neither Eugenius IV nor the English government seems to have been particularly interested in the establishment of such a mediator. The pope apparently saw no reason, in da Monte's case, to depart from the established custom of charging his permanent representative in England only with routine matters, and therefore continued to entrust the discussion of sensitive issues to special envoys.⁷² In England, on the other hand, da Monte's efforts to style himself as unofficial papal legate were almost certainly viewed as undue

⁶⁸ FERGUSON, pp. 130–37; SCHOFIELD, *passim*; HARVEY, pp. 161–74.

⁶⁹ Compare his own assessment of the situation in 1435/6, DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 105r (to Eugenius IV, spring 1436), f. 105v (to Zabarella, June 1436), HALLER, pp. 16–7.

⁷⁰ HALLER, pp. *43–6; SCHOFIELD, pp. 55–7, pp. 82–3, pp. 84–109; HARVEY, pp. 149–183.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91; HALLER, pp. *48–53.

⁷² Thus the papal legate Roberto Cavalcanti was dispatched to England in the late summer of 1437 to secure English adherence to Eugenius IV in the question of the recent *monitorium* from Basel. *ibid.*, p. *56; HARVEY, pp. 163–5.

attempts to assert the authority of Eugenius IV in a country that still upheld the Statute of Provisors. Besides, the position of permanent papal plenipotentiary in England was, in theory, already held by archbishop Chichele as *legatus natus*. Chichele's relations with Rome were, however, notoriously difficult; *de facto*, English diplomatic contacts with the Curia were, therefore, largely controlled by Cardinal Beaufort and his ally, Archbishop Kemp.⁷³ Finally, by trying to establish himself as middleman between the English government and the papal court, da Monte was poaching in territory that was, as has been shown in the previous chapter, firmly in the hands of the powerful Castiglione/Beaufort connection.⁷⁴ The services the collector could render to the English government and the Curia were, therefore, limited.⁷⁵ Moreover, as an outsider, da Monte was excluded from the favours the Castiglione/Beaufort network was able to confer on its members.⁷⁶ Finally, as a potential competitor, the collector risked antagonising Beaufort and Branda da Castiglione, as the regnant *padrini* in Anglo-Papal relations.⁷⁷

Presumably, da Monte's attempts to establish himself as a self-appointed legate would still have stood some chance of success, if he had, upon his arrival in the realm, offered his services to Gloucester; for the duke was then ascendant in English government, and, without powerful connections at the Curia, he might have welcomed da Monte's offer to broker contacts with Eugenius IV.⁷⁸ Instead, da Monte, until autumn 1437, courted Cardinal Beaufort. In that period,

⁷³ ULLMANN, W., 'Cardinal Kemp, Eugenius IV, and Archbishop Chichele', in WATT, J.A./MORRALL, J.B./MARTIN, F.X. (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History presented to Aubrey Gwynn* (Dublin, 1961), pp. 359–83; HARRISS, pp. 273–4.

⁷⁴ Above, chapter thirteen, pp. 149–52.

⁷⁵ Compare da Monte's telling observation in his letters of 31 July 1439 to Beaufort, DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 182r, HALLER, p. 105 "Etsi non dubitem, reverendissime pater princepsque illustrissime, aliorum litteris acerbissimum quendam Basiliensium processum contra pontificem maximum te antea cognovisse" and to Bildestone, *ibid.*, f. 183r, HALLER, p. 108, "Que a Basiliensibus . . . gesta sunt scio te non ignorare. In eo enim es loco, ad quem celerius novitates omnes deferuntur."

⁷⁶ Significantly, da Monte was the only papal collector in England between 1417 and 1447 who did not receive an English benefice that fell under the right of provision of Cardinal Beaufort or his political allies in consistory, HARVEY, p. 77, pp. 97–8 and above, chapter thirteen, pp. 150–51.

⁷⁷ Possibly the hostility with which he was met upon his return from England, ZANELLI, pp. 362–5; RICCIARDI, p. 144 and the persistent rumours at the Curia that he had embezzled English indulgence money, HALLER, pp. *95–6 and pp. 195–200, emanated from within the Castiglione/Beaufort connection.

⁷⁸ See above, Part One, chapter six, pp. 70–8.

Beaufort's political fortunes were at their lowest point since 1419; the cardinal would, therefore, have been of little help in da Monte's attempts to ingratiate himself with the dominant forces in English government.⁷⁹ Yet even in his political disgrace, Beaufort could draw on powerful connections at the papal court; he had, therefore, no need of da Monte's services as a broker of contacts at the Curia, and could afford to ignore the collector's advances.⁸⁰

Da Monte changed his allegiances from Beaufort to Gloucester in autumn 1437, that is precisely at the moment when the restitution of the royal council as the central organ of policy-making sealed the end of Gloucester's short-lived political ascendancy and reaffirmed Beaufort as *de facto* head of Henry VI's government.⁸¹ A more politically inopportune move is hard to conceive, and da Monte's increasingly desperate requests for a recall from his assignment in England which he now no longer described as "legation" but as "relegation", testify to his growing sense of failure.⁸² It may have been a mark of his resignation that the collector, towards the end of his stay, began to focus on the financial aspect of his mission, which he had previously so eloquently rejected.⁸³

In the late summer of 1440 da Monte finally received permission to return to the Curia. Given that he had aspired to the cardinalate—or, failing that, the archbishopric of Milan—da Monte must have perceived his investiture, in 1442, with the see of Brescia as a personal slight, particularly since he was forced to pay an annual indemnity to his predecessor in the see, who had been transferred to another bishopric after he had been unable to solve a violent conflict between the town's civic and ecclesiastical administrations.⁸⁴ In 1443, da Monte was appointed as papal legate charged with negotiating the revocation of the Pragmatic Sanction with Charles VII.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Above, pp. 149–52.

⁸¹ Above, Part One, chapter seven, pp. 81–2.

⁸² For da Monte's use of the term "relegation" with reference to his English assignment see e.g. DA MONTE, 'Epistolary', f. 150r (to Ziliolo Orsini, February 1438), f. 173r (to Traversari, April 1439), HALLER, p. 93. For his requests for permission to return to Rome see *ibid.*, pp. *87–9; ZANELLI, pp. 354–61.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, f. 201r–v, (to Vincent Clement, February 1440), HALLER p. 131–2, f. 202r–v (to Scarampo, February 1440), HALLER, pp. 134–5, ff. 205r–206r (to Eugenius IV, February 1440), HALLER, pp. 138–41 and *ibid.*, pp. *54–5; ZANELLI, pp. 340–44.

⁸⁴ ZANELLI, pp. 46–54; HALLER, p. *92; RICCIARDI, p. 144.

Finally, it seemed, he had attained the dignity he had coveted for so long. Yet, exceptionally, da Monte's commission with the legateship was not accompanied by a promotion to consistory.⁸⁵ Perhaps, his unsolicited services in England had created the impression at the Curia that da Monte was sufficiently naïve to take on difficult assignments without asking for adequate recompense. Predictably, his French mission proved a failure.⁸⁶ Aware that he had no more to expect from Eugenius IV, da Monte retired to Brescia. Only under Nicholas V did he return to the Curia; yet even if the early death of that pope had not soon put an end to the brief revival of da Monte's fortunes, it remains doubtful whether he would ever have been able to realise his dream of a promotion to the college of cardinals.⁸⁷ With his background in the *studia humanitatis* and his training as a jurist, da Monte was highly-qualified; his past record as an eloquent defender of papal supremacy against conciliar claims endowed him with the right kind of political credentials; during his English assignment he had had a chance to gather experience in papal diplomacy and as an apostolic protonotary, da Monte held an elevated position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁸⁸ Gifted and ambitious, da Monte may, therefore, have believed that he would be able to emulate the example of his protector Lodovico Scarampo, who, from obscure beginnings, had managed to insinuate himself at the very centre of papal power.⁸⁹ Yet, Scarampo was an exception, and Dieter Girgensohn's analysis of curial careers during the first half of the fifteenth century demonstrates that lineage and nepotism were still the decisive criteria for promotion to the college of cardinals.⁹⁰ Despite his friendships with members of the Venetian patriciate such as Andrea Giuliano,

⁸⁵ The fact that da Monte was not promoted to the cardinalate when he was commissioned with his French legation was considered sufficiently unusual to be noted by his contemporaries. Thus an anonymous fifteenth century reader noted at the back of da Monte's autograph copy of his *Repertorium Utriusque Iuris*, Vatican City, B.A.V. MS Vat.lat. 2347, "Hic auctor [da Monte] fuit legatus Eug. IIII quamvis non erat cardinalis, et ita appellatus in Francia pro unione Grecorum, verum fuit legatus vel an inferioris cardinalis."

⁸⁶ ZANELLI, pp. 365-78; HALLER, pp. *93-6.

⁸⁷ For da Monte's career under Nicholas V see *ibid.*, pp. *96-100.

⁸⁸ GIRGENSOHN, 'Wie wird man Kardinal', pp. 147-53.

⁸⁹ On Scarampo [aka Lodovico Trevisan] see COSENZA, M.E., *Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary of the Italian Humanists and the World of Classical Scholarship in Italy, 1300-1800* (5 vols., Boston, 1962) iii, 2023-4; ALCARO, A., *Lodovico Scarampo* (Bologna, 1931) and PASCHINI, P., 'Umanisti intorno a un Cardinale', *La Rinascita*, 1 (1937), pp. 52-73.

⁹⁰ GIRGENSOHN, 'Wie wird man Kardinal', pp. 147-53.

Pietro Miani and Ermolao Barbaro and cardinal nepotes like Ziliolo Orsini and Giorgio Cesarini, with whom he shared the same literary interests and the same egalitarian discourse, da Monte did not belong to the aristocracy, and, apart from Scarampo, he could not draw on powerful support at the Curia.⁹¹ Even if he had been more successful in his missions to England and France, da Monte may thus have found it impossible to push through the glass ceiling that separated intelligent young parvenus like him from the likes of Pietro Barbo or Giovanni da Castiglione, who—as nephews of great men—advanced with effortless ease in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁹²

The integrative reconstruction of Piero da Monte's career as papal collector and mediator between Humphrey, duke of Gloucester and Italian humanists, demonstrates that da Monte perceived his activity as a broker of literary contacts between Gloucester and other English bibliophiles and the humanist community in Italy not as a gentlemanly pastime but as a stratagem he employed in his endeavours to become a powerful mediator between the English government and the papal court. From the beginning of his mission the collector neglected his duties as a financial administrator in favour of the diplomatic aspects of his assignment and tried systematically to extend his diplomatic powers from those of a nuncio to those of a legate. Meanwhile, he acted as self-appointed defender of papal interests against putative conciliarist sympathies in England.

Lacking an official mandate, da Monte had no access to the sort of classified information from Rome and the court of Henry VI that would have made him an interesting contact person for the English government and Eugenius IV. Therefore, he endeavoured to establish his own network of informers in England and at the Curia. To this end he engaged in patronage, procuring luxury goods from northern Europe for his friends in the papal administration in return for curial favours for his clients in the English government. In the first two years of his English mission da Monte apparently sought to win the favour of Cardinal Beaufort and his political allies. In the winter of 1437/8, however, the collector switched his allegiances to Gloucester and archbishop Chichele. Only thereafter did the col-

⁹¹ For the seemingly egalitarian discourse that was cultivated in the circles in which da Monte moved, and its importance for the affirmation of patrician dominance in the Venetian context, see KING, pp. 18–31, pp. 64–6; SOTTILI, p. 57.

⁹² Compare the telling observation by da Monte's contemporary, above, p. 191n.

lector emerge as a middleman between the English duke and Italian humanists. This suggests that da Monte's activity as the duke's literary agent was, by analogy to his secondary brokerage for other members of Henry VI's government, primarily motivated by his desire to win the support of Gloucester as one of the most prominent men about Henry VI. Aware of Gloucester's pragmatic approach to literature, da Monte may have believed that the recommendation of suitable humanist clerks, the selection of appropriate humanist works and their adaptation to the specific requirements of the duke, would win him Gloucester's favour and, possibly, even permit him to influence his policy. Da Monte's literary brokerage on behalf of the duke was thus an integral part of his activity as a papal diplomat; ultimately it was motivated by the collector's ambition for personal advancement in the Church. Alongside Zanone da Castiglione's activity as Gloucester's literary agent, da Monte's cultural brokerage thus provides a further example of the significance of interlocking particular interests in the transmission of Italian Renaissance humanism to England.

Unfortunately for the collector, his good relations with Gloucester proved of little practical value for the promotion of his personal ambitions. Politically isolated, Gloucester was unable to further da Monte's interests in England. Moreover, by trying to launch himself as a powerful middleman between England and Rome, da Monte was breaking into a domain that for more than a decade had been the exclusive preserve of the powerful Beaufort/Castiglione-connection; his endeavours were, therefore, bound to meet with resistance in England and Rome. Yet even if da Monte's attempts to act as self-appointed legate in England had been crowned by success, it remains doubtful whether he would have been able to realise his dream of ascent to the consistory; the college of cardinals was an exclusive club, where lineage and powerful connections still counted for more than personal merit. Duped by his own early success and his seemingly egalitarian friendships with members of the Venetian aristocracy, da Monte had spent his life striving for a position that had always been out of his reach. That he should have died of a broken heart when he finally realised his error, appears both like a topos from a medieval *exemplum* on the pitfalls of ambition and like a tragic coda to an early modern tale of self-fashioning.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CONCLUSION

This section has argued that the activity of Zanone da Castiglione and Piero da Monte as Gloucester's literary middlemen was not isolated from their public office, but constituted an integral part of their action as brokers in Anglo-Papal relations. At a time when the Papacy, after the Schism and in response to the centrifugal forces emanating from the general councils, was trying to assert its control of the periphery, Zanone da Castiglione and Piero da Monte, in their function as papal diplomats, systematically attempted to gain control of the flow of information between the papal court and the English government. Zanone did so by gradually taking over the network of contacts his uncle, Cardinal Branda da Castiglione, had established between England and the Curia. Da Monte endeavoured to launch himself as a middleman through the extension of his diplomatic prerogative and by courting the principal wire-pullers in England and Rome. The ultimate motivation for their aspirations to the position of mediators in Anglo-Papal relations was the hope of promoting their personal objectives. Zanone wished to extend, consolidate, and protect his dynastic interests in Lancastrian France; da Monte hoped that the successful performance of his role of self-appointed papal legate would recommend him for a promotion to the college of cardinals.

Whereas Zanone predominantly occupied the position of broker-patron in his relations with the Curia and the English court, da Monte mostly acted as broker-client. Several factors contributed to this status difference. Zanone's aristocratic background, the wealth of his family, and the excellent relations at the Curia and at the English court of his powerful uncle, endowed him with a stable position in the social hierarchy, a certain degree of economic independence, and a ready-made network of reliable contacts with the principal players in England and Rome. Zanone was thus, from the beginning, positioned at the centre of Anglo-Papal relations. This central positioning granted him access to a maximum of information at a minimum of cost. As a result, he could effortlessly consolidate his role

of broker-patron. Da Monte, on the other hand, came from a section of the Venetian populace that occupied a liminal position in the social hierarchy of that city; he owed his rise at the papal court to the services of the parvenu Scarampo; he had no prior contacts with the English government, and his mandate as nuncio endowed him only with very limited powers. As an eccentric figure, da Monte could not draw on any of the advantages that characterised Zanone's position; the time, money, and effort he had to invest to secure the support of important contact persons in Rome and England, were not compensated by the modest gains in information he received in return. Perpetually living beyond his means, da Monte therefore never managed to escape his status as a broker-client.

The disparity between Zanone and da Monte was reinforced by their different understanding of the mechanisms that determined the working of politics in England and Rome. Both men were typical middlemen in as far as, particularly with members of the English government, their alliances were dictated by political opportunism. Zanone's primary tie with Cardinal Beaufort, his discreet flirtation with Gloucester during the short-lived ascendance of the duke between 1435 and 1437, and his astute changing of sides to Charles VII in the course of the 1440s, testify to the bishop's skill in assessing the shifting power-constellations in England. As far as the Papacy was concerned, no-one would have been better able to teach Zanone the finer points of curial intrigue than his powerful uncle Branda di Castiglione. Zanone was thus particularly well equipped for the role as broker in Anglo-Papal relations. Da Monte's misinterpretation of the reorganisation of English government in November 1437, and his fatal decision to change his allegiance from Beaufort to Gloucester at precisely the time when Gloucester lost his influence in English politics, on the other hand, suggest an incomplete understanding of the distribution of power in the polity of Henry VI. The collector's ambition to launch himself as an independent agent alongside the mighty Beaufort/Castiglione connection are indicative either of tragic naïveté or of unpardonable presumptuousness. Meanwhile, da Monte's apparently unshakeable confidence that his unsolicited services would, ultimately, win him a Red Hat, testify to his tenuous grasp on the realities of curial politics. Such deficiencies did not help to compensate for the intrinsic weakness of his position as broker-client, and explain why da Monte's endeavours to establish himself as a powerful mediator in Anglo-Papal relations were doomed to failure.

As middlemen between England and Rome, Zanone and da Monte thus perfectly matched the definition of brokers proposed in the introduction to this section; but how did their literary brokerage on behalf of Gloucester fit into this picture? The fact that Zanone acted as the duke's literary agent only during Gloucester's brief periods of political ascendance, and the recognition that da Monte emerged as mediator between the duke and Italian humanists only after he had changed his political allegiances from Beaufort to Gloucester, have here been interpreted as indications that the literary brokerage of both men was primarily motivated by their desire to curry favour with Gloucester as an important member of the English government. The allusions to the duke's self-image as *tutor* of Henry VI and protector of the Lancastrian commonweal in the covering letters to the dedication copies, which the Italian humanists sent to Gloucester at Zanone's behest, and the proposed references, in da Monte's contribution to the Scipio/Caesar controversy, to Gloucester's role as self-appointed defender of Henry VI's sovereignty against encroachment by Beaufort, demonstrate, that both middlemen were acutely aware of the duke's perception of his own role in English politics and wished to play up to it.

Clearly, Zanone and da Monte understood their literary agency on Gloucester's behalf as a form of sub-brokerage to support their activity as mediators between the English government and the Curia. This was important for the extension and consolidation of their respective networks of informants, on which Zanone and da Monte depended for the successful performance of their role as mediators. The example of da Monte's activity as a supplier of papal favours for his friends in England and as procurer of luxury goods from northern Europa for his *amici* at the Curia demonstrates that their activity as literary agents was only one of many possible forms of secondary brokerage Zanone and da Monte employed in order to further their primary ambitions in politics.

That both Zanone and da Monte relied on literary brokerage to win Gloucester as a potentially important contact person in Henry VI's government, suggests that both middlemen perceived this literary agency as the easiest way to approach Gloucester. This indirectly confirms the findings of the preceding section which showed that his interest in literature was a central characteristic of the duke's action. It has here been proposed that for Zanone, whose powerful connections at the Curia would have allowed him to serve the duke

also in other, more straightforwardly political functions, literary brokerage represented a discreet way to approach Gloucester as prospective protector of Lancastrian Normandy, without upsetting the existing close relations of the Castiglione with Cardinal Beaufort. For da Monte, on the other hand, whose influence at the Curia was limited and who had little else to offer than his good connections with the humanist community, literary brokerage may have offered the most impressive way to recommend himself to Gloucester and secure the duke's services as an informant at the centre of the English government.

Significantly, Gloucester solicited Zanone's agency as literary broker when he requested his help in the acquisition of humanist works in Italy. Zanone then publicised the duke's request in Italian humanist circles and waited for suitable offers from men whom he knew mainly as clients of his powerful uncle. Da Monte, on the other hand, who was bound to the members of humanist community by ties of friendship (as in the case of Frulovisi) or clientage (as in the case of Poggio, whom he hoped to win as his supporter in the papal secretariat) had to canvass the services of the *litterati* by means of flattery or material gifts. Once he had received the works which, he hoped, would meet Gloucester's interests, da Monte then, at his own initiative, approached the duke and submitted his literary offerings to his scrutiny.

The difference between Zanone, as broker-patron and da Monte, as broker-client, thus extended also to their literary sub-brokerage. This discrepancy in their status may have directly influenced the nature of the respective literary contacts these middlemen could offer Gloucester. As a broker-patron, who was firmly established at the centre between the Curia and the dominant forces in English government, Zanone's need for Gloucester's political favours was intermittent and limited; consequently, he could afford to pay comparatively little attention to his literary brokerage. Indeed, Zanone's literary agency on behalf of the duke remained confined to the selection of works that he considered interesting for Gloucester; that is, biographies of military leaders from antiquity, which pandered to Gloucester's self-image as triumphant warlord, and educational treatises, that played up to the duke's pedagogical ambitions for Henry VI. These ready-made texts were then only superficially adapted to Gloucester's putative expectations by the addition of flattering covering letters. Da Monte, on the other hand, was a broker-client, whose marginal position with respect to the Curia and the English court rendered

him dependent on Gloucester's political support. Accordingly, he invested considerable time and effort in his literary brokerage on the duke's behalf. The collector did not leave it at selecting texts that roughly matched Gloucester's presumed self-image; da Monte's choice of Poggio's contribution to the Scipio/Caesar controversy as a pertinent commentary on Gloucester's power-struggle with Beaufort in 1439/40, and his adaptation of the text to the duke's requirements, testify to his efforts to fine-tune his literary brokerage to Gloucester's reading expectations and indicate da Monte's sensitivity to the duke's predicament in English politics in the late 1430s.

Apparently, these accommodations to Gloucester's needs had positive effects on the reception of da Monte's texts, and the stability of the relations between the English duke and the Italian humanists that were forged through the collector's agency. Da Monte's version of the Scipio/Caesar controversy may have served as blueprint for the formulation of Gloucester's position in the *Declaracione*. The duke's commission of the *Vita Henrici Quinti* and the *Humfroidos* indicate that Gloucester approved of da Monte's commendation of Frulovisi for the position as his *poeta et orator*; Frulovisi's laudatory comments on the duke suggest that the relations between Gloucester and his humanist in residence proved mutually satisfying.¹ Antonio Beccaria, whom da Monte may have recommended as Frulovisi's successor, remained in the duke's household for more than eight years. During this period, he produced several translations from the Greek and Italian for Gloucester and, even after his return to Italy in 1445, he continued to send his latest productions to his erstwhile master.² Finally, da Monte's and Frulovisi's texts were intensively received in England. Meanwhile, it is impossible to ascertain the influence on the formulation of Gloucester's policy of any of the works that reached him through the agency of Zanone da Castiglione. None of the contacts with Italian humanists which Zanone brokered for the duke in 1437 were transformed into lasting relations, and evidence for the English reception of the texts that came into the country through Zanone's mediation is scanty.³

¹ WEISS, p. 43.

² SAMMUT, pp. 21-2.

³ The only exception was Pier Candido Decembrio, who entered into a six year working relationship with Gloucester. Yet the role of Zanone da Castiglione and Rolando Talenti in the establishment of that contact was minimal; instead it owed

Although their agency on behalf of Gloucester was of pivotal importance for the transmission of Italian humanism to England, the emergence of Zanone da Castiglione and Piero da Monte as Gloucester's literary brokers, was not due to these men's putative commitment to the propagation of the cultural achievements of Italy, but resulted from an interlocking of particular interests: interests that were shaped by the political conditions and cultural values that were prevalent in England and Italy during the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

The findings from these two case studies suggest that literary brokerage cannot be considered as an isolated phenomenon in the sphere of culture; instead, it appears as a secondary aspect of political brokerage. This ancillary character does, however, not diminish the importance of literary brokerage; on the contrary: the decision of the powerful Cardinal Branda da Castiglione to provide his nephews with an education in the *studia humanitatis*, and the fact that Branda's nephew, Zanone, was not beyond acting as a literary agent to further his aims in politics, demonstrate that even successful power brokers attributed practical value to the knowledge of literature and that they considered literary sub-brokerage as an integral part of their action.

This has three consequences for the historian. First, the cultural activity of power brokers can no longer be dismissed as mere ornament that has nothing to contribute to the understanding of their political action; on the contrary, his literary brokerage can provide a key to the understanding of a middleman's primary aims in politics. Thus Zanone's emergence as Gloucester's literary agent in 1437 testifies to the shrewdness and flexibility with which the Castiglione reacted to shifts in the distribution of power at the head of the English government. Second, literary brokerage did not take place in a political vacuum; an examination of the wider objectives and the specific conditions that defined their primary role as political brokers can elucidate the motives that encouraged literary middlemen to engage in this particular form of sub-brokerage. Moreover, acknowledgment of the political context deepens the understanding of the contents, the function, and the form of texts that were being mediated. Thus the analysis of da Monte's predicament as broker-client, and his political rapprochement with Gloucester in 1437/8,

its inception almost exclusively to Decembrio's personal initiative see below, Part Three, chapter eighteen, pp. 222–8.

make it possible to appreciate the collector's *De Vitiis* and his contribution to the Scipio/Caesar controversy not as plagiarisms but as perceptive commentaries on the political situation in England in 1438/9 and as sensitive adaptations to English reading expectations, that were intended to compensate for da Monte's inability to offer Gloucester more tangible proofs of his abilities as a self-appointed mediator in Anglo-Papal relations. Finally, cognisance of the position and the power literary brokers commanded in the field of politics, will help to understand their appeal as contact persons for the humanist community in Italy. The relations of these Italian humanists with Gloucester and his middlemen are examined in the following section.

PART THREE

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS. THE MOTIVES OF
ITALIAN HUMANISTS FOR SEEKING PATRONAGE
OF EMPLOYMENT IN ENGLAND 1428 TO 1444

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

INTRODUCTION

“Anglicos-Britannos . . . qui etsi litteras sciunt adeo tamen rudes et artis grammaticae aliarumque scientiarum aliquando ignari sunt”; this, at least, was the opinion of the eminent humanist Flavio Biondo.¹ Biondo had never left Italy, the authority of his statement was, therefore, questionable; yet even those humanists who had personally been to England, such as Poggio Bracciolini and Ænea Silvio Piccolomini, did little to dispel the image of barbarous Britannia by describing the English as excessive drinkers whose sole claim to refinement was their cuisine.² The military triumphs of Henry V had deeply impressed his contemporaries; yet such a text as the fantastical account of the origins of the Hundred Years War which Bartolomeo Facio published in the late 1430s suggest that most Italian humanists had only the most nebulous idea of a country which, from their perspective, was situated at the very periphery of the civilised world.³

None the less, several humanists sought patronage and employment in England during the second quarter of the fifteenth century. Between 1418 and 1423, Poggio Bracciolini served in the household of Henry Beaufort. In the late 1430s, Tito Livio Frulovisi and Antonio Beccaria succeeded each other as secretaries of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester; and from Italy Pier Candido Decembrio, Antonio Pacini and Lapo da Castiglionchio sent their translations to the English duke. The majority of these men never ascended to the pantheon of Quattrocento humanist luminaries. This has led many historians to conclude that only second- or third-rate *umanisti*, who had been rejected by the

¹ BIONDO, F., ‘De verbis Romanae locutionis’, cf. HAY, p. 326n.

² Compare BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 35 (to Niccolò Niccoli, 12 February 1421); PICCOLOMINI, Æ.S., *De viris illustribus*, ed. A.V. HECK, Studi e Testi, cccxlv (Vatican City, 1991), 86.

³ For the impression Henry V left on his contemporaries compare e.g. *ibid.*, pp. 84–6. Facio’s ‘De origine inter Gallos et Britannos belli historia’ is printed in DOGLIO, M.L., *L’exemplum nella novella latina del ’400* (Turin, 1975), pp. 161–75. For a discussion of the humanists’ stereotypical perception of England see RUNDLE, ‘Republics and Tyrants’, pp. 50–54.

Italian market, went to seek their fortunes abroad.⁴ Meanwhile, the four-and-a-half-years' stay in England of Poggio Bracciolini, one of the figureheads of early Quattrocento humanism, has been presented as an inexplicable and inconsequential quirk in his biography.⁵

These theories are not confirmed by the evidence. Hitherto unnoticed material in the Vatican Archive suggests that his previous work-experience in Beaufort's household may have been the key qualification that determined Poggio's appointment to the prestigious office of papal secretary which the humanist held for three decades after his return from England.⁶ Moreover, Quattrocento Italians did not necessarily consider the humanists who sought patronage or employment in England as minor talents.⁷ Lapo da Castiglionchio was described by Vespasiano da Bisticci as one of the most promising translators from the Greek of his generation.⁸ Gloucester's first humanist in residence, Tito Livio Frulovisi, has been pilloried by modern scholars for his superficial knowledge of Greek and his incompetence as a versifier; yet he was apparently considered sufficiently accomplished by his contemporaries to obtain a position in the ducal chancery of Milan, and his *Vita Henrici Quinti* was deemed interesting enough to an Italian audience to be translated into the vernacular by Pier Candido Decembrio.⁹

These inconsistencies call for a revision of the established account: a revision which reconsiders the factors that determined Italian humanists during the second quarter of the Quattrocento to seek patronage and employment in England. To undertake such a revision was the original objective of the following investigation. In the course of research, however, it became obvious that this project was too ambitious to be completed in the context of the present study. The first obstacle was the lack of sources. Hardly anything is known about Antonio Pacini beyond the fact that during the late 1430s, he sent translations of Plutarch's *Lives* to Gloucester, and the

⁴ Below, chapter seventeen, p. 211n.

⁵ Below, chapter nineteen, pp. 237–8.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Compare RUNDLE, 'Virtue and Weiss', p. 189.

⁸ DA BISTICCI, i, 582.

⁹ For modern judgements on Frulovisi see the introduction to FRULOVISI, *Opera Omnia* by C.W. PRÉVITÉ-ORTON (Cambridge, 1932) (cited from now on as PRÉVITÉ-ORTON) p. xiv; WEISS, 'Frulovisi', pp. 220–21; HAY, p. 329. For Frulovisi's career in Milan and Decembrio's translation see ARBIZZONI, G., 'Frulovisi, Tito Livio de', *DBI*, I (1998), 646–50, at p. 649; WYLIE, J.H., 'Decembrio's version of the *Vita Henrici Quinti* by Tito Livio', *EHR*, xxiv (1909), 84–9.

situation is only insignificantly better for Antonio Beccaria. Moreover, the heterogeneous background of the humanists concerned, defied systematic analysis: the Florentines Poggio Bracciolini and Lapo da Castiglionchio are found alongside the Milanese Pier Candido Decembrio and the Venetian Tito Livio Frulovisi; the parvenu Poggio stands beside the impoverished aristocrat Castiglionchio; the career of Decembrio, who remained in the same office for over three decades, contrasts with that of Frulovisi, who rarely stayed in one place for more than two years; and the biography of the cleric Beccaria constitutes a counterpoint to that of laymen like Poggio or Frulovisi. Most importantly, however, there exists hardly any secondary literature that could be used to interpret the case studies of these humanists. The key to the understanding of their interest in English patronage clearly lies in their professional aspirations. Yet the reconstruction of the professional careers of Quattrocento humanists has hitherto been largely neglected by modern scholarship. This disregard results from the development of Renaissance studies during the past 150 years. Until well into this century, Renaissance scholars have tacitly accepted the nineteenth century separation between the field of cultural production and the economic and political sphere.¹⁰ Studies of Renaissance humanism therefore tended to focus on the literary aspects of humanist experience. Roberto Weiss's definition of humanism in the introduction to his *Humanism in England* is a typical expression of this approach:

Humanism will be understood to embrace the whole range of classical studies and activities as conceived by the Italians from the days of Petrarch, and by 'humanist' the scholar who studied the writings of ancient authors without fear of supernatural anticiceronian warnings, searched for manuscripts of lost or rare classical texts, collected the works of classical writers, and attempted to learn Greek and write like the ancient authors of Rome.¹¹

The professional careers of the *umanisti* were relegated to the background, and evidence that humanists had pushed for promotion or an increase of their salaries, were censured as unbecoming indications of their ambition and greed.¹²

¹⁰ For an analysis of this separation compare BOURDIEU, P., *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge, 1993).

¹¹ WEISS, p. 1.

¹² E.g., *ibid.*, pp. 60–61; VICKERS, pp. 353–4, pp. 368–9; SCHIRMER, p. 30.

Against this notion Paul Oskar Kristeller in the 1940s and 50s introduced a new, more specific, description of Renaissance humanism:

I . . . understand by humanists those scholars who *by profession or vocation* were concerned with the *studia humanitatis* . . . and by humanism the body of literature, scholarship and thought represented by the writings of the humanists.¹³

About the same time, Hans Baron made a powerful case for the study of Florentine civic humanism as a central moment in the development of European political thought.¹⁴

In the wake of these new definitions, Renaissance scholars have increasingly turned their attention also to aspects of the humanists' professional careers, their activity as educators and political apologists and the social environment in which they moved.¹⁵ Since the 1980s, growing interest in the workings of Renaissance patronage has, moreover, inspired studies of the way in which patterns of patronage determined humanist biographies.¹⁶

¹³ KRISTELLER, 'European Diffusion', p. 148, [my emphasis].

¹⁴ BARON, H., *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (2 vols., Princeton, N.J., 1955, 1966), p. 459, "By engendering a new type of Humanism—*civic Humanism*—the transition about 1400 and in the early Quattrocento even transcended in significance the history of Florence and of Renaissance Italy. Civic Humanism . . . exhibited . . . several diverse facets. There was the new philosophy of political engagement and active life, developed in opposition to ideals of scholarly withdrawal. There was the new historical interpretation of Rome and the Imperium Romanum from the vantage-point of contemporary political experience. And, finally, there was the fresh approach to a vernacular Humanism and a defense of the moderns against the ancients—the still inconsistent, but already unmistakable demand that in the present-day world, in dealing with one's own state, language, and literature, one should act as the ancients acted in dealing with *their* states, languages, and literatures." Compare, however, the critique of Baron by SEIGEL, J.E., 'Civic Humanism or Ciceronian Rhetoric?', *Past&Present*, xxiv (1966), 3–48.

¹⁵ Compare e.g. RUBINSTEIN, N., 'Poggio Bracciolini cancelliere e storico di Firenze', *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Petrarca di Arezzo*, n.s. xxxvii (1958–64), 215–39; BARON, H., "Leonardo Bruni: 'Professional Rhetorician' or 'Civic Humanist'?", *Past&Present*, xxxvi (1967), 21–37, at pp. 27–37; MARTINES, L., *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists 1390–1460* (Princeton, N.J., 1963); RYDER, A.F.C., 'Antonio Beccadelli: A Humanist in Government', in CLOUGH, C.H. (ed.), *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance: Essays in Honour of Paul Oskar Kristeller* (Manchester, 1976), pp. 122–40; WITT, R.G., *Coluccio Salutati and His Public Letters* (Geneva, 1976); SKINNER, *Foundations*, vol. i; MERCER, R.G.G., *The Teaching of Gasparino Barzizza. With Special Reference to his Place in Paduan Humanism* (London, 1979), the articles on Leonardo Bruni's political rhetoric by Rubinstein, Garin and Fubini in VITI, P. (ed.), *Leonardo Bruni Cancelliere della Repubblica di Firenze* (Florence, 1990) and id., VITI, P., *Leonardo Bruni e Firenze. Studi sulle lettere pubbliche e private* (Rome, 1992).

¹⁶ IANZITI, G., *Humanistic Historiography under the Sforzas. Politics and Propaganda in*

Yet despite Jerry Seigel's appeal to examine "those segments of society to which the humanists immediately belonged: their professional groups, their subsequent generations", the majority of these new studies still tend to examine the relations of the humanists only with the world outside the humanist environment.¹⁷ Patron-client relations within the humanist community, the role of *amicitia*, inter-marriage or god-parentage in the humanist community have hitherto escaped scholarly attention.¹⁸ Moreover, even when investigating the professional careers of the *umanisti*, most scholars continue to focus on the literary and theoretical aspects of the humanists' professional activity such as their role as publicists, historiographers or educational theorists. Their practice as pedagogues or their everyday routine in the chanceries of Renaissance Italy, their career patterns and self-image as professionals yet await systematic analysis.¹⁹

In part, these *lacunae* result from a problem of sources. Aspects of the humanists' professional careers and social relations can be reconstructed from their private epistolaries, their professional correspondence and archival documents. An abundance of such material has survived in Italian libraries and archives; hitherto, however, not even the private letter collections of many leading Quattrocento humanists are fully available in reliable editions.²⁰ The situation is even

Fifteenth Century Milan (Oxford, 1988); ROBIN, D., *Filelfo in Milan: Writings 1451-1477* (Princeton, N.J., 1991). See also the works by J. Bentley and M.L. King, op. cit. These studies received important impulses from LYTLE, G.F./ORGEL, S. (eds.), *Patronage in the Renaissance* and KENT, F.W./SIMONS, P. (eds.), *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 1987).

¹⁷ SEIGEL, p. 43.

¹⁸ HYATTE, R., *The Arts of Friendship: the Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature* (Leiden, 1994) provides a first, not entirely convincing step into this direction.

¹⁹ Case studies of humanist career patterns and theoretical reflections on the problems of their systematisation are offered by Ianziti, Bentley and King, passim. GRAFTON, A./JARDINE, L., *From Humanism to the Humanities. Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London, 1986), chpt. 1; GRENDLER, P.F., *Schooling in Renaissance Italy. Literacy and Learning 1300-1600* (Baltimore MD, 1989); GUALDO, G., 'Antonio Loschi'; id. 'Umanesimo e segretari apostolici'; id., 'Leonardo Bruni, segretario papale (1405-1415)', in VITI, *Bruni Cancelliere*, pp. 73-96; BROWN, A., *Bartolomeo Scala, 1430-1470. Chancellor of Florence* (Princeton, NJ, 1979) highlight aspects of humanist professional praxis. FIORATO, A.C., 'Grandeur et Servitude du Secrétaire: du Savoir Rhétorique à la Collaboration Politique', in id., (ed.), *Culture et Professions en Italie (fin XV^e-début XVII^e siècles)* (Paris, 1989), pp. 133-84 could provide a blueprint for analyses of the self-image of humanist bureaucrats of the Quattrocento.

²⁰ The epistolaries of Leonardo Bruni and Ambrogio Traversari, for instance, are only available in the eighteenth century editions of Lorenzo Mehus, supplemented

more problematic with regard to the humanists' professional correspondence. Although there are indications that at least some humanists perceived their official letters as an important part of their *œuvre*, this material has hitherto been largely disregarded by historians of Renaissance humanism.²¹

Finally, there exist only few theoretical considerations concerning the status of the humanist epistolary as a literary genre and historical source, and despite the important preliminary observations on the subject by Martines, Bentley and King, the problem of how best to analyse sociological patterns within the humanist community is yet unsolved.²²

With no theoretical framework to approach the relevant sources, with few modern editions of important material, and without secondary literature on central aspects of humanist professional life, it is impossible to set the case studies that are discussed below into context and assess how far they are representative of humanist experience during the period under scrutiny. This investigation can therefore not pretend to offer conclusive answers to the question why Italian humanists sought patronage or employment in England dur-

by LUIO, F.P., *Studi sull'Epistolario di Leonardo Bruni*, ed. L. GUALDO ROSA (Rome, 1980) and id., *Riordinamento del Epistolario di A. Traversari con lettere inedite e note storico-chronologiche* (3 vols., Florence, 1898–1903). Meanwhile Harth's modern edition of Poggio's epistolary has met with a mixed reception, compare e.g. DAVIES, M.C., 'Friends and Enemies of Poggio. Studies in Quattrocento Humanist Literature' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 1986), pp. 14–22.

²¹ Pier Candido Decembrio originally intended to publish one volume of his official correspondence with his private letters, ZACCARIA, V., 'L'epistolario di Pier Candido Decembrio', *Rinascimento*, iii (1952), 85–118, at p. 90; The formularies of his curial correspondence of the papal secretary Antonio Loschi were "etiam ab eruditissimis Viris in usum receptam", FACIO, B., *De viris illustribus liber*, ed. L. MEHUS (Florence, 1745), p. 3 and the existence of a fair copy of one of Poggio's secretarial registers from the Curia (RV 359), discussed below, introduction to Appendix I, suggests that Poggio may have harboured similar ambitions. For preliminary attempts to survey and analyse the surviving public correspondence of Leonardo Bruni see VITI, *Bruni e Firenze*; id., 'Le lettere pubbliche del Bruni: tradizione manoscritta a problemi di attribuzione', in id., (ed.), *Bruni Cancelliere*, pp. 341–58; DAVIES, M.C., 'Su alcuni codici di lettere pubbliche di Leonardo Bruni', in *ibid.*, pp. 359–70.

²² For a recent discussion of the theoretical problems posed by humanist epistolaries and a bibliography of relevant secondary literature see HARTH, H., 'Überlegungen zur Öffentlichkeit des humanistischen Briefs am Beispiel der Poggio-Korrespondenz', in HEIMANN, H.D./HLAVÁČEK, I. (eds.), *Kommunikationspraxis und Korrespondenzwesen im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance* (Paderborn and Munich, 1998), pp. 128–37; compare also ROBIN, p. 13n. For discussions of the problems with the systematisation of humanist professional biographies compare MARTINES, pp. 95–105; KING, pp. 255–314; BENTLEY, 135–7.

ing the second quarter of the fifteenth century. Instead it presents preliminary findings which, it is hoped, will provide a point of departure for further investigation.

The analysis focuses not on the literary attainments of the humanists concerned, but on their professional careers. This shift of perspective is not motivated by the assumption that their professional ambitions were more consequential in the formation of these humanists' biographies than their literary aspirations; instead it results from the conviction that literary aspirations and professional ambitions were equally important elements of humanist experience. By highlighting the hitherto neglected professional side of this experience, the following investigation aims thus to open the way for further, integrative, studies of the interrelation between the professional and the literary aspects of humanist biographies.

Based on a comparison of the professional careers of twenty professional humanists, who were active between 1420 and 1430, on humanists' epistolaries and archival evidence, the inquiry is guided by four questions: First, what common experience characterised the humanists who aspired to patronage or employment in England? Second, what did these humanists expect from their foreign contacts? Third, how successful were they in realising these ambitions? Finally, which factors determined their success or failure?

The investigation departs from the hypothesis that it was not their putative literary incompetence which forced humanists to seek foreign patronage or employment during the second quarter of the Quattrocento, but structural changes within the literary community that led to heightened competition in Italy. Moreover, it is here proposed that the northward orientation of men like Decembrio, Frulovisi or Castiglionchio presented an active response, rather than a passive reaction, to these structural changes. Such an examination throws new light on the motives that determined individual humanists to seek patronage or employment in England and, as a case study, it contributes to the understanding of the wider processes that led to the transmission of Italian Renaissance humanism to northern Europe.

The inquiry opens with an examination of factors that determined the humanists' professional lives in Italy during the first half of the Quattrocento. Building on the findings of this preliminary investigation, the study then considers the biographies of humanists who sought English patronage or employment during this period. First, it examines the careers of the *umanisti* who from Italy endeavoured

to establish contacts with Humphrey, duke of Gloucester or his middlemen. Second, it analyses the professional biographies of those humanists who left Italy between 1418 and 1438 to seek employment in England.

The aim is to draw attention to factors other than literary attainment which shaped the careers of professional humanists; at the same time the study hopes to show that men like Poggio Bracciolini, Lapo da Castiglionchio, or Tito Livio Frulovisi perceived patronage or employment in England as a means actively to take control of their professional lives and thus to create a basis for the realisation of their dream of literary independence.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON HUMANIST CAREER PATTERNS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE QUATTROCENTO

The humanists who sought patronage or employment in England during the second quarter of the Quattrocento, thus the established account, were minor figures, unable to hold a candle to their celebrated peers such as Guarino da Verona or Leonardo Bruni; they had failed to find employment in Italy and therefore had been forced to venture north.¹ The present investigation shifts the focus of attention from the issue of literary accomplishment to other factors that may have determined the professional careers of the humanists concerned.

The inquiry considers first, why the humanists, who sought patronage or employment with Humphrey, duke of Gloucester in the late 1430s and early 1440s, were predominantly unknown figures at the time of their contacts with Gloucester or his middlemen. Second, it examines the differences between these minor figures and celebrated humanists such as Guarino or Bruni. Finally, it draws attention to structural changes in the Italian job market that may have affected the course of humanist careers during the first half of the Quattrocento. The aim is to raise awareness of factors other than literary accomplishment which influenced the course of humanist careers; at the same time, this preliminary survey intends to create a basis for the examination of the case studies in the subsequent chapters of this section.

Modern scholars usually cite appointment to an elevated position in Italy and/or international scholarly reputation as marks of distinction that defined the rank of an individual humanist within the humanist community. The failure of the humanists who sought patronage or employment in England during the late 1430s and early

¹ Rossi, p. 9, "I contatti col mondo italiano rimasero perciò affidati, in un primo tempo, a figure minori destinate a far parte di una storia dell'umanesimo europeo proprio per quella funzione di mediatori che esse esercitarono all'estero, ripetendo l'esperienza dei 'vagantes' perché avevano poche speranze di affermazione in patria ove erano pressoché sconosciuti." For similar, if less emphatic, statements compare HAY, p. 328 and RUNDLE, 'Virtue and Weiss', p. 189.

1440s, to have attained such elevated positions or to have enjoyed such an international reputation by the time they first established contacts with Gloucester or his middlemen tends to be read as an indication of their lack of literary competence.²

Reputation is an elusive quality; appointment to office, on the other hand, can be charted with a degree of precision. A comparative survey of the careers of twenty professional humanists who were active during the first half of the Quattrocento suggests that during this period, a humanist was on average thirty-four years old before he was appointed to a leading chancery position or lectureship; in fact, fifty per cent of these humanists attained such distinction only during the latter half of their thirties or their early forties.³ In many cases, little is known about the careers of these men before they assumed such a high office. The biography of an eminent humanist like Poggio Bracciolini gains profile only during the Council of Constance, by which time Poggio was already in his mid- to late thirties; nor is much known about the first three decades in the lives of Leonardo Bruni or Guarino da Verona.⁴

The humanist clients of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester were all born during the first decade of the Quattrocento; when they first sought to establish contacts with the duke or his middlemen in the late 1430s and early 1440s they therefore were in their early to mid-thirties.⁵ Consequently, the relative obscurity of these men at the time of their first contact with Gloucester or his middlemen was not necessarily an indication of their putative literary shortcomings; rather, it may have resulted from the fact that, at that point, they were yet too young to have made their professional breakthrough in Italy or

² For the implicit acceptance of fame and/or elevated office as measures of humanist distinction see VICKERS, p. 351, pp. 353–4; SCHIRMER, pp. 20–21, p. 28, WEISS, *Humanism*, p. 21, p. 41, p. 52; SAMMUT, pp. 7–8, p. 21.

³ Below, Appendix II, central column. On the basis of Kristeller's definition of humanism, cited above, chapter sixteen, p. 205, a professional humanist is, for the purposes of this investigation, defined as a man who earned his living primarily by the exercise of a profession that was immediately connected with his specialist knowledge of the *studia humanitatis* (teachers/lecturers, publicists, chancery clerks). Members of other professional groups, such as jurists, clerics, or patrician amateurs, who were interested in the *humaniora*, but whose professional career and economic survival did not immediately depend on their humanist accomplishment are excluded from consideration.

⁴ DAVIES, 'Friends and Enemies', p. 10; VASOLI, C., 'Bruni, Leonardo', *DBI*, xiv (Rome, 1972), 618–33, at pp. 618–9; SABBADINI, R., *Vita di Guarino Veronese* (Genova, 1891), pp. 1–11.

⁵ Below, Appendix II, nos. 13, 15, 18.

to have won the sort of public recognition that would have found a reflection in the sources.

The issue of age also has its bearing on the proposition that the humanists who sought Gloucester's patronage could not compare with their celebrated peers like Bruni, Guarino or Poggio.⁶ With few exceptions, the brightest stars of the humanist movement during the 1430s were all born between 1370 and 1380.⁷ Some thirty years older than Gloucester's clients, these humanists were at the height of their success during the 1430s when Decembrio, Frulovisi or Castiglionchio, were still struggling to establish themselves professionally. Any interpretation which compares these younger humanists unfavourably with their celebrated elder peers is, therefore, misleading; for it disregards the circumstance that they belonged to another generation than that of men like Bruni, Poggio, or Guarino, and it obscures the fact that these younger *umanisti* were at a different stage in their careers during the period under scrutiny than the figureheads of the humanist movement.

But what encouraged the members of the second generation of Quattrocento humanists—unlike their elder peers—to seek patronage in England? In order to answer this question it is helpful to consider the factors that determined the careers of these two generations of Quattrocento humanists. The members of the elder generation owed their professional success during the opening decades of the Quattrocento mainly to three factors. First, Bruni, Guarino, and their contemporaries belonged to the first generation of Italians who could boast a systematic knowledge of Greek. The intermittent teaching in Florence, Pavia, and Venice between 1397 and 1414, of the Greek pedagogue Manuel Chrysoloras (c. 1350–1415) had introduced them to the language and literature of ancient Greece, and the ability of Bruni, Guarino and their contemporaries to translate key authors such as Aristotle, Plato, and Plutarch from the Greek and to impart their knowledge of the language to others, laid the foundations for their ascendance in early Quattrocento Italy, where, ever since the days of Petrarch, the literature of ancient Greece had been attracting increasing attention.⁸

⁶ For such assertions see SCHIRMER, p. 36; WEISS, *Humanism*, p. 27, p. 41; id., 'Frulovisi', p. 223; ROSSI, p. 9; SAMMUT, pp. 27–8.

⁷ Appendix ii, nos. 1–7.

⁸ CAMMELLI, G., *I dotti bizantini e le origine dell'umanesimo*, vol. i, *Manuele Crisolora*

The second factor which contributed to the success of the first generation of Quattrocento humanists was patronage from within the humanist community. Leonardo Bruni was a just another young notary from Arezzo, until the Florentine chancellor, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), took him under his wing in the late 1380s. Salutati introduced Bruni to his literary circle, a meeting place for the humanist avantgarde and leading members of Florentine society, and, shortly before his death, the ageing chancellor used his connections at the Curia to secure Bruni's appointment to the apostolic secretariat, one of the leading clerical positions in Quattrocento Italy. Similar alliances could be cited for other humanists of Bruni's generation.⁹

Perhaps the most important reason for the success of Bruni, Guarino and their contemporaries was, however, the fact that the period during which these men came professionally of age, that is the opening decades of the Quattrocento, witnessed an unprecedented demand for humanists in Italy. Classically trained clerks had found employment at the Curia ever since the late fourteenth century; yet the decision of John XXIII and his successors to fill the positions in the papal secretariat almost exclusively with accomplished humanists was an initiative that may have set the pace for the rest of Italy.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the surge of interest in Greek studies in the wake of Chrysoloras had opened an expanding market for teachers of that language. Guarino and Aurispa taught at the Florentine *studio*, and such was the success of the schools which Vittorino da Feltre and Guarino set up in Venice and Padua in the late 1410s, that by the early 1420s the d'Este and Gonzaga offered ever higher salaries to win the members of the new teaching élite as private tutors for their

(Florence, 1941), *passim*; GENEAKOPILOS, D.J., 'Italian Humanism and the Byzantine Émigré Scholars', in RABIL (ed.), *Renaissance Humanism*, i, 350–81, at pp. 354–6.

⁹ For Bruni's relations with Salutati see VASOLI, pp. 619–22. For similar associations compare e.g. Poggio's friendship with Salutati and Niccolò Niccoli, WALSER, pp. 12–7.

¹⁰ For the papal chancery compare VOIGT, G., *Die Wiederbelebung des klassischen Alterthums oder das erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus* (2 vols., Berlin, 1880), ii, 1–44; GUALDO, 'Umanesimo e segretari umanistici'; DIENER, H., 'Die Mitglieder der päpstlichen Kanzlei des 15. Jahrhunderts und ihre Tätigkeit in den Wissenschaften und Künsten', *QFIAB*, lix (1989), 111–24 and below, chapter nineteen, p. 240. For the employment of humanists in the chanceries of the Italian city states, compare, for Florence, MARTINES, pp. 145–98; GARIN, E., 'I cancellieri umanisti della repubblica fiorentina da Coluccio Salutati a Bartolomeo Scala', *RSI*, lxxxi (1959), 185–208; for Naples, BENTLEY, pp. 50–62, pp. 84–137; for Venice, KING, pp. 295–6.

offspring.¹¹ Buoyed by the general enthusiasm for the new learning, even lesser lights could hope to be swept into comfortable positions in Italy during the first quarter of the Quattrocento.¹²

The second generation of Quattrocento humanists had to contend with entirely different conditions. The popularity of the courses of Guarino, Aurispa, da Feltre in the late 1410s and 1420s meant that by the early 1430s many more young men had a command of Greek than at the beginning of the century. Bartolomeo Facio commented the effect of Guarino's teaching with a suggestively ambiguous simile:

Ab hoc uno plures docti et eloquentes viri facti sunt quam a ceteris omnibus huius ordinis, ut non immerito quidam de eo dixerit, quod de Isocrate dictum ferunt, plures ex eius schola viros eruditos, quam ex Equo Troiano milites prodiisse.¹³

As a result, prospective employers could now choose between several equally qualified candidates for one position. Meanwhile, the number of attractive openings in Italy was decreasing. For, once Bruni, Poggio and their contemporaries had established themselves in leading positions in the late 1410s and early 1420s, they clung to their offices on average for thirty-one years.¹⁴ Accordingly, between 1435 and 1445, that is during the period in which the men born during the first decade of the fifteenth century could have expected to join the élite of humanist professionals, many of the most attractive positions in Italy were blocked. The situation in the papal secretariat provides a good illustration of this phenomenon. Under Eugenius IV, the papal secretariat comprised four active members. Two of these, Cencio Rustici (1390– after 1445) and Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), were members of the first generation of Quattrocento humanists, who had joined the secretariat during the first half of the pontificate of Martin V and who respectively remained active until

¹¹ For Guarino in Florence (1410–14) SABBADINI, *Vita di Guarino*, pp. 15–21. For his employment with the d'Este, id., *La Scuola e gli Studi di Guarino Guarini Veronese* (Catania, 1896), pp. 23–6. For Vittorino da Feltre as educator of the Gonzaga children compare WOODWARD, W.H., *Vittorino da Feltre and other Humanist Educators: Essays and Versions* (Cambridge, 1897), particularly pp. 29–36.

¹² Compare for instance the career of Giovanni Aurispa, whose modest abilities did not hinder his investment with a lectureship at the Florentine *studio* in 1425 and his appointment as tutor of one of the d'Este children in 1427, BIGI, E., 'Aurispa, Giovanni', *DBI*, v (Rome, 1962), 593–5.

¹³ FACIO, *De viris illustribus*, p. 18.

¹⁴ Appendix II, marked with asterisk.

1443 and 1453.¹⁵ In 1431 and 1434 two representatives of the younger generation—Andrea da Florentia (1400–1452) and Flavio Biondo (1392–1463)—were appointed; thereafter, however, no humanist joined active service in the secretariat until 1446, when Eugenius IV called Ænea Silvio Piccolomini to that office.¹⁶ Between 1434 and 1446, that is precisely during the critical period in which the younger generation of Quattrocento humanists came professionally of age, there were thus no vacancies in the papal secretariat; and, with the possible exception of the courts of Alfonso V and Leonello d'Este, things looked not much brighter elsewhere in Italy. Moreover, even when the members of the old guard finally vacated their posts, they were more often than not replaced by another member of their generation instead of a newcomer.¹⁷ Finally, rather than supporting their younger peers in their struggle for professional recognition, the mandarins of the first generation preferred to promote their own offspring. The ducal secretary of Milan, Uberto Decembrio, resigned his office into the hands of his son Pier Candido, and the papal secretaries, Loschi, Cencio Rustici and Poggio likewise took care to provide their sons with comfortable positions at the Curia.¹⁸

Regardless of their literary accomplishment, the members of the second generation of Quattrocento humanists had thus to fight harder for professional recognition than their elder peers some twenty years before. The *cri de coeur* which Lapo da Castiglionchio addressed to Leonardo Bruni in 1436 may have summed up the experience of his generation:

Etenim quamquam ab initio nulla honoris et gloriæ cupiditate, sed tantum voluntate et delectatione adductus et spe quaedam excolendæ vitæ, contemptis abiectisque ceteris rebus omnibus, me ad harum inge-

¹⁵ Below, introduction to Appendix i, Rustici was replaced by the ambitious cleric Bartolomeo Roverella (1406–76), OTTENTHAL, p. 79; PARTNER, P., *The Pope's Men. The Papal Civil Service in the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 70–71; HOFMANN, ii, 112.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 111–2.

¹⁷ Compare for instance the succession to the Florentine chancellorship. When this office became vacant in 1444 after Leonardo Bruni had held it for seventeen years, a member of the second generation, Carlo Marsuppini (1398–1453), was appointed to the chancellorship. After Marsuppini's premature death in 1453, however, it did not fall to a contemporary of Marsuppini, but to the septuagenarian Poggio Bracciolini, who had previously served as an apostolic secretary for thirty years.

¹⁸ For Decembrio see below, chapter eighteen, p. 219. For the sons of the apostolic secretaries see HOFMANN, ii, 92, 110, 115.

niorum et humanarum artium studia contulissem . . . Itaque . . . horum temporum horum hominum horum morum, totius denique rationis ignarus, fore existimabam ut, cum his litteris non dico imbutus et ornatus sed leviter tinctus prodirem, ad omnes vel amplissimos honores et dignitatis gradus facilis pateret aditus, nec eos petendos esse aut desiderandos, sed ultro vel invito recusanti deferendos esse. Hac spe et cogitatione ubi iam tantum profecisse visus sum, quantum ab homine non omnino otioso ad usum vitae ac dignitatem afferendum esset, temptare institui et ad eum, quem ipse proposueram, cursum incumbet. In quo longe aliter evenit atque eram opinatus. Incidimus enim in ea tempora, in quibus nullus non modo rectis studiis bonis [que] artibus honos propositus, sed nec virtuti quidem et probitati locus relictus esse videatur; ut qui sperassem, me omnia sine ullo labore etiam facile adepturum, idem iam annum aut eo amplius huic rei toto [animo] atque omnibus ut dixerim servis intentus, nullis laboribus nullis vigiliis nec per me nec per amicos quicquam assequi potuerim. Neminem ex iis principibus reperi, non qui me praemio peteret, nam id iam antea desperaram, sed qui gratius orantem id atque obsecrantem tecto tantum ac victu dignum duceret.¹⁹

If this was the situation in Italy in the mid-1430s, if humanist career patterns were determined by factors such as age and generational patterns, and if increased competition in the Italian job-market during the second quarter of the Quattrocento rendered it difficult for young humanists, regardless of their competence, to establish themselves professionally, then what effect did these factors have on the decision of some these young humanists to seek patronage or employment in England?

¹⁹ Cf. LUIO, F.P., 'Studi sul epistolario e le traduzioni di Lapo di Castiglionchio juniore', *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*, viii (1899), 205–99, at pp. 235–6.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE USES OF FOREIGN PATRONAGE. PIER CANDIDO DECEMBRIO, LAPO DA CASTIGLIONCHIO AND ANTONIO PACINI AND THE BACKGROUND FOR THEIR CONTACTS WITH GLOUCESTER OR HIS MIDDLEMEN 1437 TO 1444

Confronted with the difficulties they encountered in their attempts to establish themselves professionally during the 1430s, some members of the second generation of Quattrocento humanists sought to forge contacts with foreign patrons such as Gloucester. Previous studies implied that men like Pier Candido Decembrio, Lapo da Castiglionchio or Antonio Pacini sent samples of their works to the English duke via his middlemen, because they hoped to win Gloucester's patronage and thus both to gain financially and to enhance their reputation within the humanist community.¹ The following case studies either consider aspects of the established interpretation in more detail, or they offer alternative readings. The discussion of Pier Candido Decembrio's relations with Gloucester between 1437 and 1443 analyses the contribution of foreign patronage to the making of a humanist's reputation. A re-examination of the client/broker/patron-nexus between Lapo da Castiglionchio and Antonio Pacini, Zanone da Castiglione and Gloucester, on the other hand, proposes that the primary motive for these young humanists to send their works to Gloucester was not their wish to win the patronage of the English duke, but their hope thereby to oblige his middleman Zanone da Castiglione, in his function as gatekeeper to the powerful Castiglione-network at the papal court.

The objective of these case studies is to deepen the understanding of the advantages Italian humanists could hope to accrue from foreign patronage, and to raise awareness of the complex structures underlying seemingly straightforward client/broker/patron-relations.

¹ Compare most recently RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 26–7, p. 195.

From 1437 to 1440, Pier Candido Decembrio, the head of the Milanese state chancery, executed a new translation of Plato's *Republic* for Humphrey duke of Gloucester; between 1438 and 1444 Decembrio acted as the duke's literary agent in Italy, selecting and acquiring humanist publications for his English patron. Previous studies have proposed that the Milanese humanist sought Gloucester's patronage because he wished to outshine Leonardo Bruni, who had translated Aristotle's *Politics* at the duke's request. Furthermore, it has been asserted that Decembrio hoped to gain financially from his agency on the duke's behalf.² The following discussion deepens this interpretation by focusing specifically on the way in which Decembrio instrumentalised his contact with Gloucester to vindicate and consolidate his reputation within the humanist community. The investigation aims further to elucidate Decembrio's motives for seeking Gloucester's patronage; to provide additional information on the role of middlemen in the relations between the English duke and his humanist clients; and to draw attention to factors which could hinder the communication between northern patrons of humanism and their Italian clients and which could hence have adverse effects on the process of cultural transmission between Italy and England.

Born in 1399, Pier Candido Decembrio was luckier than most humanists of his generation: in 1419, at the age of twenty, he could succeed his father Uberto as secretary in the ducal chancery of Milan.³ He remained in that office for thirty-one years and was thus spared the economic and professional insecurity experienced by most of his humanist contemporaries. Yet with his office Pier Candido had also inherited his father's reputation as an indifferent scholar. Uberto Decembrio (c. 1350–1427) was derided in humanist circles for his allegedly poor mastery of Greek, and his detractors were quick to extend their scorn also to his privileged son.⁴

² VICKERS, pp. 357–8, p. 364; SCHIRMER, p. 27, p. 30; WEISS, pp. 59–60.

³ VITI, P., 'Decembrio, Pier Candido', *DBI*, xxxiii (Rome, 1987), 488–98, at p. 488.

⁴ RESTA, G., *Le Epitomi di Plutarco nel Quattrocento* (Padua, 1962), pp. 25–35 and HANKINS, J., *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols., Leiden, 1990), i, 119–20; id., 'A manuscript of Plato's *Republic* in the translation of Chrysoloras and Uberto Decembrio with annotations of Guarino Veronese', in id./MONFASANI, J. et al. (eds.), *Supplementum Festivum. Studies in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller* (Binghamton N.Y., 1987), pp. 149–88, at pp. 153–8.

These taunts seem to have originated in a diffuse combination of political dissent and scholarly jealousy. As chief publicists of Visconti Milan, the Decembrii were bound to rouse the hostility of humanists of other political allegiances.⁵ This animosity was exacerbated by the fact that Uberto Decembrio, more than any other Italian humanist, had enjoyed the friendship of the celebrated Greek professor Manuel Chrysoloras.⁶ During Chrysoloras' lifetime, his other pupils in Florence and Venice had refrained from criticising their venerated master's partiality for the elder Decembrio; after Chrysoloras's death in 1415, however, they no longer held back. Their scorn focused particularly on a translation of Plato's *Republic* which Decembrio had executed in collaboration with Chrysoloras in 1402. Chrysoloras had first produced an unidiomatic Latin rendering which Decembrio had then endeavoured to transform into a readable text.⁷ The failure of this joint venture to meet the new translation-standards propagated by humanists like Leonardo Bruni, provided Decembrio's rivals—chief among them Guarino da Verona—with a welcome opportunity to denounce his alleged shortcomings as a Hellenist and to claim that Decembrio had exploited Chrysoloras to style himself as an accomplished translator. As far as Pier Candido Decembrio was concerned, he was habitually dismissed as an unoriginal plagiarist of his lacklustre father.⁸

The scholarly reputation of the younger Decembrio was thus compromised before he had even started his independent career. The role of reputation in humanist biographies has yet to be analysed systematically; clearly, however, it constituted a central aspect of humanist experience. *Riputatione* defined a man's position in relation to others in the humanist milieu; *ripuatione* determined his literary and professional success.⁹ Accordingly, Pier Candido strenuously

⁵ Ibid., p. 153.

⁶ CAMMELLI, pp. 107–26.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 122–5; DITZ, E., 'Pier Candido Decembrio. Contributo alla storia dell'umanesimo italiano', *Memorie del Reale Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere. Classe di Lettere, Scienze Morale e Storia*, xxiv (1931), 21–106, at pp. 30–33; HANKINS, 'A manuscript', pp. 154–5.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 150–61. For Bruni's translation-theory see above, Part One, chapter five, pp. 65–6.

⁹ Compare e.g. DA BISTICCI, i, 478, "In questo tempo era meser Lionardo venuto in tanta riputatione, che in Italia et fuori di Italia era la fama sua, et del continuo erano in Firenze infiniti scrittori che iscrivevano l'opera sua, parte in Firenze et parte per mandare fuori, in modo che meser Lionardo non andava in luogo, non trovassi che dell'opere sua si scrivesse. In tanta riputatione erano venute, che

endeavoured to vindicate his reputation. Yet, rather than boldly asserting his independence of his own and his father's detractors, he determined to win their recognition, and thus implicitly accepted their authority. Having taught himself Greek during the early 1430s, Pier Candido first endeavoured to prove that he was no less accomplished a Hellenist than Guarino and his sympathisers. He publicly denounced mistakes and unacknowledged omissions in the translations of the Veronese humanist; on another occasion, Pier Candido, in an obvious bid to impress Guarino, sent him a Greek letter—only to have it returned to him without comment but covered in correction marks.¹⁰

Undaunted, Decembrio took on Leonardo Bruni, the chief proponent of the new theory of translation. As with Guarino, Decembrio's attempts to win Bruni's recognition oscillated between hostility and the desire to conquer Bruni's friendship. Having in 1436, in his capacity as official Milanese publicist, composed the *De laudibus Mediolanensium urbis panegyricus* in response to a new edition of Bruni's *Laudatio Florentinae urbis*, Decembrio, only a year later, took Bruni's side in the debate with Alfonso García Cartagena, the bishop of Burgos.¹¹ In 1430, Alfonso had critically reviewed Bruni's translation of Aristotle's *Ethics*, alleging that the humanist's rhetorical elegance failed to do justice to Aristotle's philosophical rigour. Early in 1436, Alfonso had passed on a copy of this review to the archbishop of Milan, Francesco Pizolpasso, a renowned patron of humanism. Pizolpasso submitted the treatise to Leonardo Bruni who, in October 1436, published an acerbic rejoinder to Alfonso in which he accused the Spanish bishop of a lack of understanding of the humanist project in general and of Greek scholarship in particular.¹²

per tutto il mondo erano domandate". For reputation as a decisive factor for professional success e.g. *ibid.*, p. 547, "a Firenze morì meser Carlo d'Arezo, cancelliere della Signoria. Subito fu eletto meser Poggio, per la sua fama et riputatione." See also the pertinent observations by MARTINES, pp. 252–62.

¹⁰ DITT, p. 73; RESTA, pp. 27–9; ZACCARIA, V., 'Sulle Opere di Pier Candido Decembrio', *Rinascimento*, vii (1956), 13–74, at p. 35; HANKINS, *Plato*, i, 119–20.

¹¹ DITT, p. 70; ZACCARIA, V., 'Pier Candido Decembrio e Leonardo Bruni', *Studi Medievali*, viii (1967), 504–55, at pp. 520–27; LENTZEN, M., 'Die Rivalität zwischen Mailand und Florenz in der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts: zu Pier Candido Decembrios *De laudibus Mediolanensis urbis in comparatio Florentie Panegyricus*', *Italienische Studien*, ix (1986), 5–17; VITI, P., 'Leonardo Bruni e il Concilio del 1439', in *id.* (ed.), *Firenze e il Concilio del 1439*, Biblioteca Storica Toscana (2 vols. Florence, 1994), ii, 509–75, at pp. 511–5.

¹² BIRKENMAJER, A., 'Der Streit des Alonso von Cartagena mit Leonardo Bruni

Pier Candido Decembrio apparently perceived the controversy between Bruni and Alfonso as a unique chance to prove his authority in matters of translation and to ingratiate himself with Bruni. Early in 1437, Decembrio published a treatise in which he defended Bruni against the alleged obscurantism of the Spanish bishop.¹³ Yet in his eagerness to please Bruni, young Decembrio seems to have spilled more than the acceptable amount of vitriol against Alfonso.¹⁴ Apparently embarrassed by Decembrio's polemic, Bruni coolly thanked the Milanese secretary for his unsolicited support and henceforth adopted a pointedly conciliatory tone in his own dealings with Alfonso.¹⁵ Quite clearly, Decembrio had overshot his mark; what was worse, his attack on Alfonso had not only failed to find favour with Bruni, but it had also incurred the displeasure of his mentor, Francesco Pizolpasso, who, in his turn, sharply censured Decembrio's invective.¹⁶

Decembrio was still recovering from this gaffe when word spread in the humanist community that Leonardo Bruni had decided to rededicate his recently completed translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, which he had originally undertaken at Gloucester's commission in 1433, to Eugenius IV.¹⁷ Bruni's unprincipled abandonment of his English patron for a more promising Italian maecenas caused a stir in humanist circles.¹⁸ For Decembrio, it presented a fresh opportunity to challenge Bruni. Having recently revised Book V of his father's

Aretino', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, xx (1922), 129–236; FRANCESCHINI, E., 'Leonardo Bruni e il 'vetus interpres' dell'*Etica a Nicomaco*', in *Medioevo e Rinascimento. Studi in Onore di Bruno Nardi* (2 vols., Florence, 1955), i, 299–319; PAREDI, A., *La Biblioteca del Pizolpasso* (Milan, 1961), pp. 47–8; FUBINI, R., 'Tra umanesimo e concili. Note e giunte a una pubblicazione recente su Francesco Pizolpasso' *Studi Medievali*, 3rd ser., viii (1966), 323–70, at pp. 337–43.

¹³ ZACCARIA, V., 'L'epistolario di Pier Candido Decembrio', p. 90; id., 'Sulle opere', p. 58.

¹⁴ Compare Poggio's cautionary remarks on the treatise, BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, ii, 239 (to Bruni, 10 April 1437).

¹⁵ For Bruni's response to Decembrio, DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', f. 21r. For Bruni's reaction to Decembrio and his further conduct with regard to Alfonso see SABBADINI, *Le Scoperte*, p. 235; id., *Storia e critica*, 224–45; BIRKENMAJER, p. 153.

¹⁶ DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', f. 39v (Decembrio to Pizolpasso, 1437, defends himself against Pizolpasso's criticism); BIRKENMAJER, p. 149.

¹⁷ Above, I.4.2, pp. 80–82; VICKERS, p. 353; SCHIRMER, pp. 26–7; WEISS, pp. 48–9; SAMMUT, pp. 10–14.

¹⁸ For humanist reactions to Bruni's rededication see BORSA, M., 'Correspondence of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester and Pier Candido Decembrio', *EHR*, xix (1904), 509–26, at p. 513, p. 525; NEWMAN, W.L., 'The Correspondence of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester and Pier Candido Decembrio', *EHR*, xx (1905), 484–98, at p. 496; WEISS, p. 49; SAMMUT, p. 11.

version of the *Republic*, Decembrio determined to move into the gap left by Bruni's defection, and to offer Gloucester a full rendering of the *Republic* as a replacement for the *Politics* translation of the Florentine chancellor.¹⁹ Having refused to accept him as a friend, Bruni would now have to acknowledge him as a rival.

Despite its alleged incompatibility with Christian doctrine, the *Republic* was considered one of the key texts in political theory apart from the *Politics*.²⁰ Yet prior to Uberto Decembrio's translation, this text had not been available in Latin. Gloucester, whose interest in political theory was attested by his large collection of texts in that genre, was, therefore, bound to greet the offer of Uberto's son with enthusiasm.²¹

Their interlocking interests may have sufficed for Gloucester and Decembrio directly to establish a working relationship; yet, bowing to convention, Decembrio first sought to approach the English duke through a middleman. Early in autumn 1437, the Milanese humanist proposed to Zanone da Castiglione, who was at that time acting as Gloucester's literary agent in Italy, that he should undertake a full translation of the *Republic* and dedicate it to the duke.²² But cautioned by allegations that Pier Candido's version of Book V of the *Republic* was no more than a thinly disguised copy of his father's poor production, Zanone initially hesitated to accept Decembrio's offer.²³

¹⁹ BORSA, pp. 510–11; NEWMAN, p. 484; VICKERS, pp. 353–8; SCHIRMER, pp. 26–7; WEISS, p. 54. Based on the production by Uberto Decembrio and Chrysoloras, Pier Candido's version of the *Republic* presented nonetheless an independent rendering, below, p. 223. Therefore it is in the following designated as Decembrio's translation.

²⁰ HANKINS, J., 'Plato in the Middle Ages', in STRAYER, J.R. (ed.), *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (13 vols., New York, 1982–9), ix, 694–704.

²¹ For Gloucester's collection see above, Part One, chapter five, p. 60n. By 1437, the duke had lost his influence on Henry VI and he may no longer have had any illusions about his nephew's intellectual abilities; therefore it is here proposed that he did not commission the *Republic* translation as a 'mirror' for the king, but for his own use.

²² DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary' (Decembrio to Zanone), f. 14r, "Hoc tamen opus ab exordio inchoare et latinis mandare litteris institui, et prudentissimo Principi Duci Clouestrie per manus tuas destinare, cui per litteras meas rem aperui, ut opus divinum singulare et toto orbe omni etati nulli cedens, in maximam benemeriti ducis laudem ab inferis emergeret. Essetque melioris amicitie vinculum inter impares quamvis et toto orbe divisos viros, quam inter ipsum et Dionysium olim Pythagoreum clarissima cohors dedit auspicium. Tuum igitur est nunc, pater humanissime, vel imperfectum sumere, vel perfectum expectare, quod brevi fiet, nec minus utile opere quam Aristotelis *Politicam* aut *Ethicam*." For Zanone's role as Gloucester's middleman see above, Part Two, chapter thirteen, pp. 156–61.

²³ DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', ff. 13v–14r; ZACCARIA, V., 'Pier Candido Decembrio

Impatient, Decembrio determined to approach Gloucester through Zanone's secretary at Bayeux, Rolando Talenti.²⁴ Late in the summer of 1437, Decembrio began systematically to revive his earlier acquaintance with Talenti.²⁵ Eventually, he offered him a deal: "Sentio te propinquum fore illustrissimo duci Gloucestrie", Decembrio wrote to Talenti in autumn 1437,

id est non longe abesse illis partibus quem audio literatissimum et optimum esse principem. Itaque cum ab episcopo olim Laudensi nunc Cumano [Gerardo Landriani] senserim Leonardum Aretinum *Politiam* Aristotelis, quam nomine dicti ducis traducere grecis pollicebatur, sanctissimo domino nostro destinasse, statui tua intercessione amorem illius promereri et te illi carum vicissim reddere. Nam cum *Politiam* Platonis in greco legerem, quo opere nil iocundius, nil utilius aut excellentius me vidisse arbitror, statui nove traductionis assumere laborem et stilo ornato et eleganti reseratam tradere latinis et dicto duci ascribere ad decus et nomen. Potes igitur communis utilitatis curam gerere et literis tuis avisare et meas vicissim mittere. Nam si eidem gratus fuerit labor meus opere genitoris tui, viri optimi, ad te particulas mittam ut ex grecis traducentur ut subinde ipsi principi ferantur quousque tota expleta fuerit *Politia*. Est enim decem librorum opus et celerius satisfiet voluntati sue si partes viderit et cupidius ex primis ultimam requieret et tibi diutius nostri laboris delicie manebunt.²⁶

By 1437, Talenti had lived in Normandy for some seven years. His epistolary attests that, even in this cultural diaspora, he steadfastly tried to keep up the literary standards he had assimilated in the course of an earlier education in the *studia humanitatis*.²⁷ Moreover,

Traduttore della *Repubblica* di Platone (Notizie dall' Epistolario del Decembrio)', *IMU*, ii (1959), 179–206, at pp. 182–3. On the allegations against Decembrio see id., 'Pier Candido Decembrio, Michele Pizolpasso e Ugolino Pisano', *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti*, cxxxiii (1974/5), 187–212; GARIN, E., 'Ricerche sulle traduzioni di Platone nella prima metà del sec. XV', *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, i, 339–74, at pp. 357–60. For the indebtedness of Pier Candido's version of the *Republic* to that of his father see DITT, pp. 30–33; BOTTONI, D., 'I Decembrio e la traduzione della *Repubblica* di Platone dalle correzioni dell'autografo di Uberto alle integrazioni greche di Pier Candido', AVESANI, R./FERRARI, M./FOFFANO, T. (eds.), *Vestigia*, i, 75–91. Zanone eventually supported Decembrio's bid for Gloucester's patronage DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', ff. 31v–32r (Zanone to Decembrio, 1437/8); yet his overall role as broker between Decembrio and Gloucester remained marginal.

²⁴ For Talenti see above, Part Two, chapter twelve, p. 142.

²⁵ TALENTI, 'Epistolary', f. 40v (Decembrio to Talenti, 1437, chides Talenti for not having responded to his previous letters, requests his news and asks him to write more often); DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', f. 55r (Decembrio to Talenti, 1437/8, similar content).

²⁶ Ibid., f. 55v.

²⁷ Above, Part Two, chapter twelve, p. 142.

Talenti apparently collaborated closely with Zanone in the formulation of the Castiglione policy in Normandy. In 1437, this policy was dominated by the efforts of the Castiglione discreetly to achieve a rapprochement with Gloucester by means of literary brokerage.²⁸ If he acted as middleman between Decembrio and Gloucester, Talenti would thus be able not only to support his master's strategy, but also to gain privileged access to Decembrio's translation; Talenti eagerly seized this opportunity.²⁹

In January 1438, he passed on to the duke Decembrio's offer to dedicate his translation of the *Republic* to Gloucester and thus to redress the effects of Bruni's snub.³⁰ In his own covering letter, Talenti emphasised the glory Decembrio's translation was bound to bestow on Gloucester. Concurrently he pandered to the duke's self-image as a man of politics and patron of letters.³¹ Gloucester greeted Decembrio's offer with enthusiasm; concurrently he thanked Talenti and promised to favour the interests of the Castiglione in Normandy to the best of his abilities.³² Meanwhile, Talenti, in his relations with Decembrio, played up to the humanist's self-perception as a rival of Leonardo Bruni:

Sed interea ut in ceteris soles, esto constans et Arretinum, virum doctissimum [Bruni], sed, pace sua dixerim, inconstantem exsupera, ut

²⁸ Above, Part Two, chapter thirteen, pp. 156–61.

²⁹ DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', f. 56v (Talenti to Decembrio, autumn 1437) "inprimis ago gratias humanitati tue, quod ex industria tibi diutinus collata ex vigiliis et lucubrationibus tuis me participem mercedis efficias . . . tibi polliceor me daturum operam ut quanto cius fieri poterit, tue meeque satisfiat voluntati, nec minus quam si centies sesterium aurii lucraturus sum"; *ibid.*, f. 60r (Talenti to Decembrio, 1438) "te iterum atque iterum obsecro ut conceptam spem desiderii mei non frustris, nec alteri cuiquam hoc singulare munus iniungas, et in singulis, sed in hac te presertim vere mea potius quam aliena opera ut in splendore laudum tuarum non nihil luminis accipiam et ex mercede laborum tuorum experiar gratiam aliquam vel amorem saltem apud doctissimum principum promereri."

³⁰ Vatican City, B.A.V., Vat.lat. 10669 (Gloucester's presentation copy of the *Republic*), ff. 2v–3v, printed by SAMMUT, pp. 180–81, at ll. 21–8.

³¹ DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', ff. 57v–58r (Talenti to Gloucester, 6 January 1438), printed by SAMMUT, pp. 174–5, at ll. 15–46.

³² *Ibid.*, ff. 58v–59r (Gloucester to Talenti, 6 February 1438), printed by SAMMUT, pp. 175–9, particularly ll. 1–13. "Etsi antea multos dies minime dubitaveramus, quo in nos afficeretur animo, qua observantia quaque benivolentia reverendus in Christo pater dominus episcopus Baiocensis, cum quia tantam eius in nos benivolentiam suavissimis litteris declaraverat . . . nunc demum tu, qui illius es et non secus sentis de nobis, certitudinem nostram confirmasti magis. Quo fit, ut vobis plurimas gratias agamus, et sic hortamur virtutem tuam, quod domino episcopi verbis nostris gratias agere velis litteris tuis, quibus profecto quantum nobis in futurum facultas dabitur, vestris commodis semper propitius erimus."

gloria non solum intra Apenninum et Alpes sese contineatur, sed evagetur longius et gallicas urbes peragret et transvolet fluctus mari oceani incolatque extremas regiones et intra publica gymnasia et privatos parietes excellentissimorum virorum laudetur virtus et sapientia tua.³³

As a reward, Talenti was allowed to keep the original draft of the first five books of the *Republic* which Decembrio sent to him in October 1438, with the request to have them carefully copied and transmitted to Gloucester.³⁴

This transaction apparently concluded the contacts between Decembrio and Talenti. Gloucester's political eclipse and the return to prominence of Henry Beaufort in the course of 1438 meant that it was no longer necessary for Talenti, in his capacity as representative of Castiglione interests, to cultivate the duke.³⁵ Talenti, the humanist, may have been interested in maintaining his relations with Decembrio, yet having successfully recommended himself to Gloucester's patronage, Decembrio no longer depended on the services of a middleman, and from late 1438 onwards therefore preferred apparently to communicate directly with Gloucester.

With Talenti's help, Decembrio had won Gloucester as patron for his translation of the *Republic*; at least outwardly the young Milanese humanist had thus managed to endow his translation of Plato with the same air of international acclaim that had characterised Bruni's translation of the *Politics*. He had achieved his aim of challenging the Florentine chancellor who had disdained his earlier attempts to win his recognition.³⁶

³³ DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', f. 56v (Talenti to Decembrio, October/November 1437), printed by ZACCARIA, 'Decembrio traduttore', p. 201.

³⁴ Ibid., f. 60v (Decembrio to Talenti, autumn 1438), "Libros quinque *Politie* Platonice iam absolvi, reliquos quanta cura et diligentia fieri poterit absolvi. Hunc igitur prius ad te mittam, ut princeps ille celestis tua operatione industriam celestem gustet *Politiam*, nec illi iniungetur iste labori preter quam Rolando meo, qui hoc munere in primis dignis est . . . omnium transmittendum tuam deinceps erit onus, quod tibi decus potius futurum arbitro. Haec autem erit summa petitionis meae: primum ut hos diligenter legas nihil te profecto fateri legisse luculentius, tum manu egregia conscriptos et emendatos mittes Clouestriensi principi, quem litteris tuis certum reddes me reliquos magna cura diligentiaque conscribere, ut celsitudo sua per immortalitati ac famae sui opus habeat." The manuscript Talenti had executed at Decembrio's request is today in the British Library, MS Harl. 1705, for a detailed description see RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 379–92.

³⁵ Above, Part Two, chapter thirteen, pp. 160–1.

³⁶ How clearly the smart was felt by Bruni transpires from his indignant letter to Pizolpasso of early 1440, BRUNI, L., *Leonardi Bruni Aretini Epistolarum*, ed. L. MEHUS (2 vols., Florence, 1741), ii, 119–20.

Yet, apparently eager to perpetuate his bond with Gloucester even beyond the completion of the translation project, Decembrio, from 1438 onwards, took care to establish another, more permanent link with the duke. In Milan, the secretary doubled as literary advisor to Filippo Maria Visconti, charged with the selection and acquisition of interesting new publications for the ducal library at Pavia.³⁷ Through Zanone da Castiglione, Decembrio had been apprised of Gloucester's interest in the large scale acquisition of works by Italian authors.³⁸ In 1438, Decembrio therefore determined to offer his expertise and contacts as literary agent also to his new patron in England.

Shortly after he had dispatched the first five books of the *Republic* to Gloucester via Talenti, Decembrio directly approached the duke, offering to supply him with works by Cicero and Livy. Gloucester already owned the complete works of these authors, and he therefore declined Decembrio's proposition, indicating, however, his possible interest in rarer texts.³⁹ Decembrio promptly offered him a selection of works by Apuleius, Pliny, Varro and Cornelius Celsius.⁴⁰ This time, Gloucester was interested and Decembrio apparently closed the deal to his satisfaction; for from spring 1440 onwards, he acted as the duke's official literary agent in Italy. Drawing on the vast holdings of the Visconti library at Pavia, the collection of Francesco Pizolpasso (with whom he had meanwhile normalised his relations) and his own books, Decembrio compiled lists of potentially interesting humanist publications and editions of classical texts for Gloucester, and commissioned transcriptions of these texts according to the duke's specifications.⁴¹ Between 1438 and 1443 Decembrio dispatched more than forty codices to Gloucester.⁴² Having previously depended on the services of brokers in his relations with the duke, the Milanese

³⁷ SAMMUT, A., 'Tra Pavia, Milano e Oxford: Trasmissione di Codici', in AVESANI, R./FERRARI, M./FOFFANO, T. (eds.), *Vestigia*, ii, 613–22, at p. 617.

³⁸ Above, Part One, chapter nine, pp. 109–11.

³⁹ Vatican City, B.A.V., Vat.lat. 10669 (Decembrio's presentation copy of the *Republic* for Gloucester), f. 207r–v (letter of Gloucester to Decembrio, London, 23 March 1439), printed by SAMMUT, pp. 186–7, at ll. 42–5. See also id., 'Tra Pavia', p. 615.

⁴⁰ DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', f. 64r–v (Gloucester to Decembrio, September 1439); printed by SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, p. 189, at ll. 16–29.

⁴¹ Discussed by VICKERS, pp. 361–9; SCHIRMER, pp. 36–7; WEISS, pp. 58–61; SAMMUT, 'Tra Pavia', pp. 615–22; id., *Unfredo*, pp. 35–43.

⁴² For the proposed destination of these books to the arts faculty at Oxford see above, Part One, chapter nine, pp. 111–3.

humanist had thus himself assumed the role of Gloucester's most important mediator of contacts with the literary scene in Italy.

As a middleman Decembrio was entitled to a commission for his services. His failure to reach an accord with Gloucester concerning his remuneration has hitherto been attributed either to inordinate greed on Decembrio's part, or to Gloucester's putative inability properly to appreciate the humanist's exertions on his behalf.⁴³ Against these interpretations, it is here proposed that Decembrio's difficulties with Gloucester resulted from the different conventions that regulated literary patronage in Italy and England. R.F. Green and L.C.Y. Everest-Phillips have argued that in England money and reward were difficult subjects to broach in the relations between a patron of letters and his client, and that in most cases a literary patron offered his good lordship to his client rather than remunerating his services in financial terms.⁴⁴ In Milan, Decembrio was out of reach of Gloucester's lordship; in 1441 the duke therefore offered the humanist a retaining fee of 100 ducats per annum. Gloucester's wariness that the acceptance of this fee might cause Decembrio problems with his overlord, Filippo Maria Visconti, indicates that the English duke still perceived his relations with his literary agent primarily in feudal terms. Gloucester's offer to comply with Decembrio's wishes, should the humanist prefer another form of remuneration, on the other hand, suggests that the duke was at least a vaguely aware of the fact that in Italy literary patronage obeyed different rules.⁴⁵

The conventions that informed the relations between Italian humanists and their patrons during the first half of the Quattrocento have hitherto not been systematically analysed.⁴⁶ The evidence suggests, however, that even though the relations between patrons of letters and their clients during this period were still suffused by conceptions

⁴³ VICKERS, p. 368; WEISS, pp. 60–61; SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, p. 43.

⁴⁴ GREEN, pp. 156–7, pp. 203–11; EVEREST-PHILLIPS, pp. 146–7.

⁴⁵ Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS Ambr. I 235 inf. (further copy of Decembrio's epistolary), f. 106r–v (Gloucester to Decembrio, 30 June 1441), cf. SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, p. 196, "Nos institueramus te centum ducatus annuo stipendio condonare, et iam id incepissemus efficere, nisi nos interceptisset quedam quasi suspitio principis tui ne fortasse in aliam partem acciperet officium nostrum, et dum tibi prodesse conaremur, obessemus. Voluimus propterea id tibi prius significare, ut sive hac via sive alia quavis meliori nos estimes tibi complacere posse, id nobis tuis litteris confidentissime declares."

⁴⁶ Compare, however, the valuable preliminary observations by KING, pp. 59–70; BENTLEY, pp. 47–83; ROBIN, pp. 11–55.

of 'fides', literary patronage in Italy had long since entered its 'bastard feudal' stage.⁴⁷ Humanists seem to have occasionally profited from the good lordship of their patrons; yet apparently they drew their main rewards in the form of money and other material compensations such as gifts and tax-reductions.⁴⁸ 'Patron-hopping', even across political faultlines, was an accepted practice and seems even to have heightened the attraction of individual humanists in the eyes of prospective patrons.⁴⁹ Therefore it would not have been impossible for Decembrio to accept Gloucester's retaining fee in addition to the payments he received from Filippo Maria Visconti, and initially the humanist seems indeed to have agreed to such an arrangement.

Yet as head of the Milanese state secretariat, Decembrio would have been sufficiently informed of Gloucester's precarious position in England after the Cobham scandal to have gauged it imprudent, in the long run, to rely on the patronage of a man who was living under the permanent threat of treason proceedings.⁵⁰ Moreover, in summer 1443 a villa near Milan which had formerly belonged to Petrarch came up for sale. A country retreat was a status symbol in humanist circles, and Decembrio may have hoped that the possession of a place that had once been inhabited by one of the founding-fathers of the humanist movement, would not only enhance his own glory, but also allow him to outshine his arch-rival in Milan, Francesco Filelfo, who had recently been given a villa by Filippo Maria Visconti.⁵¹ Decembrio therefore determined to make a bid for Petrarch's villa—and the money for this enterprise was to come from Gloucester.

Diana Robin and Margaret King have observed that in letters to their patrons, humanists never directly addressed financial matters.

⁴⁷ For the conception of 'fides' in humanist patron/client relations see *ibid.*, pp. 23–4.

⁴⁸ Compare e.g. MARTINES, pp. 85–144; BENTLEY, p. 60, pp. 84–137 *passim*.

⁴⁹ E.g. KING, pp. 70–76; ROBIN, pp. 58–61.

⁵⁰ For Gloucester's political situation in the aftermath of the Cobham affair see above Part One, chapter nine. Eleanor's associates had been apprehended during the night of either 28 or 29 June 1441, GRIFFITHS, 'Eleanor Cobham', p. 238; when Gloucester had first offered the annuity to Decembrio on 30 June 1441, therefore he may have yet been unaware of the fact that, only a few hours earlier, Suffolk's regime had begun to move against his wife. Two weeks later, when the Cobham scandal had gained a national dimension, Gloucester had significantly considered it necessary to assure Decembrio that, whatever rumours the humanist may have heard from England, his offer was still standing, compare Gloucester's letter to Decembrio, of 15 July 1441, SAMMUT, pp. 197–8.

⁵¹ VICKERS, p. 367.

Yet the salaries and other forms of reward that individual *umanisti* received from their respective patrons were common knowledge in humanist circles and they were frequently cited as a mark of popularity; financial issues were thus apparently discussed with a measure of openness.⁵² This makes it likely that, aware of their market value, at least the more prominent representatives of the profession could, and would, bargain with their patrons over the exact terms of their remuneration.⁵³ In the negotiations with their patrons Italian humanists scrupulously avoided the vocabulary of clientage which would have emphasised the asymmetry of the relations with their patrons; following Roman models, they adopted instead the egalitarian language of *amicitia* in their contacts with their sponsors.⁵⁴ Decembrio was, therefore, only following Italian convention, when in 1443, cloaked in the terms of egalitarian friendship, instead of his annuity he requested a lump sum that would cover the cost for Petrarch's villa from Gloucester. "Scripsi dominationi tue me provisionem non admittere", Decembrio would write a year later,

narravi tam fideliter necessitatem meam, et pretium ville olim Francisci Petrarce piis precibus ab eadem postulavi, non quidem eo pacto ut necessitatem ullam sibi imponeret, sed ut sciret qua via mihi complacere posset.⁵⁵

⁵² Compare for instance da Bisticci's frequent references to the sums individual humanists had received from their patrons, e.g. DA BISTICCI, i, 466-7 (Leonardo Bruni receives present of 600 *Fiorini* from John XXIII), p. 525 (Nicholas V awards Gianozzo Manetti annuity of 600 ducats); p. 546 (Alfonso of Aragon pays 600 ducats for Poggio's translation of Xenophon); pp. 588-9 (Nicholas V pays 1500 *Fiorini* for Guarino's translation of Strabo), ii, 56 (Nicholas V gives 500 ducats to Filelfo).

⁵³ Compare e.g. Poggio's remark concerning a position in the train of emperor Sigismund which he had been offered through the mediation of Niccolò Niccoli and Piero Lamberteschi, BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 45 (Poggio to Niccolò Niccoli, 22 February 1422), "placent mihi, que Petrus imaginatur queque offert . . . Scribit mihi se daturum operam, ut habeam triennio quingentos aureos; fiant sexcenti et acquiescam." See also da Bisticci's account of Vittorino da Feltre's negotiations with Giovanni Francesco Gonzaga, DA BISTICCI, i, 575, "andava [Vittorino] al Signore [Gonzaga], et diceva: "io ho avuto trecento fiorini de'salario, e tante centinaia n'ho ispese di più, bisogna che la Signoria vostra m'aiuti che io gli paghi". Il Signore, che l'amava assai, none faceva difficoltà ignuna."

⁵⁴ ROBIN, p. 6, p. 24 "[the terms of *patronus* and *cliens* were taboo among Renaissance intellectuals] since they made the social inferiority of the client-writer too explicit . . . No matter who paid whom, relationships among men of letters were between *amici*—'friends'." See also KING, pp. 53-4.

⁵⁵ Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS Ambr. I 235 inf., f. 17r-v, cf. SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, p. 201, ll. 46-50 (Decembrio to Gloucester, June 1444 with reference to events in the previous year).

To Gloucester, both the content and the form of this request must have appeared as a crass breach of the established rules of literary patronage as he knew it; arrogating the status of an equal, the 'liege man' Decembrio had demanded the termination of the 'feudal' bond with his 'lord' Gloucester, and openly set a price to his service.

Even at the best of times, Gloucester might have been dismayed at such apparent presumption; yet the early 1440s witnessed the steadfast erosion of his power and the duke may, therefore, have been all the more sensitive to what he must have perceived as Decembrio's lack of worship.⁵⁶ In response to the humanist's request, Gloucester therefore unilaterally cut his relations with Decembrio.⁵⁷ Only on 1 March 1444 did the duke try to revive the contact. Three days earlier he had donated the majority of the books he had received through Decembrio's agency to the university of Oxford.⁵⁸ Therefore it seems likely that Gloucester tried to renew his links with the humanist because, having depleted his stock of humanist books, he depended on Decembrio's services for further acquisitions in Italy. The uncommonly gracious letter which the duke sent the humanist on that occasion, was clearly intended as a signal that he bore him no ill will for his presumptuousness of the previous year.⁵⁹ Yet this conciliatory message seems to have been lost on Decembrio, who took Gloucester's letter as a pretext to restate in detail his request for remuneration.⁶⁰ Apparently offended by this manifest lack of tact and the high commission Decembrio claimed for his agency, Gloucester thereafter preferred to dispense with the services of the humanist.

After seven years, Decembrio had thus lost his English patron; yet those seven years had been of crucial importance for his professional biography. His bold decision in 1437 to push into the gap left by Leonardo Bruni's defection had enabled Decembrio directly to challenge the Florentine chancellor as a prominent exponent of the humanist establishment which had previously denied him its recognition. Moreover, once Decembrio had successfully won Gloucester as principal patron for his translation of the *Republic*, he apparently

⁵⁶ For Gloucester's situation during this period see above, Part One, chapter nine.

⁵⁷ VICKERS, pp. 367–8; WEISS, pp. 60–1; SAMMUT, p. 44.

⁵⁸ Above, Part One, chapter nine, p. 110.

⁵⁹ Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Ambr. I 235 inf., ff. 105v–106r (Gloucester to Decembrio, 1 March 1444), cf. SAMMUT, p. 199.

⁶⁰ Ibid., ff. 16v–18r (Decembrio to Gloucester, 1 June 1444), cf. SAMMUT, pp. 200–3.

encountered few problems in finding other eminent subscribers to the project. Upon the completion of his translation in 1440, Decembrio proudly announced to Gloucester:

*Politiā . . . iam a pluribus requisita principibus in laudem tui nominis effluxit. Nam ab illustre Leonello Marchione Estensi summo cum desiderio requisita et habita, et pro rege Hispanie a milite insigni domino Henrico nuper expedita et integra transcripta, perpetuam ut arbitror gloriam adlatura est tue dignitati.*⁶¹

Having until then only enjoyed the local patronage of Milanese court circles, Decembrio had thus successfully elbowed his way into the small élite of internationally renowned humanists, and his subsequent offer to act as Gloucester's literary agent permitted him further to consolidate this position. Apparently, his prolonged contact with Humphrey, duke of Gloucester had given Decembrio long awaited opportunity at least outwardly to step out of the shadow of the father figures of the previous generation and to establish his independent scholarly reputation.

If Pier Candido Decembrio's greatest concern in the 1430s was his scholarly reputation, the majority of his humanist contemporaries were struggling to find permanent employment. This was the lot of Antonio Pacini and Lapo da Castiglione who, in 1437/8, at the request of Zanone da Castiglione, sent samples of their work to Gloucester. Previous studies have presumed that the principal motivation for these humanists presenting their writings to the English duke was their ambition to win Gloucester's patronage.⁶² The present reading contends that Castiglione's and Pacini's primary objective in sending their works to England was the wish thereby to oblige Gloucester's middleman, Zanone da Castiglione, in his function as a gatekeeper to the curial patronage of his uncle, Cardinal Branda da Castiglione, and his satellites at the papal court.

To verify this hypothesis, it is helpful to consider the biographies of the two humanists. Hardly anything is known about Pacini apart from a crushing verdict on his intellectual abilities by his former

⁶¹ DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', ff. 64v–65v, printed by SAMMUT, pp. 191–2. For Decembrio's contacts with John II and other eminent subscribers to the *Republic*-translation see ZACCARIA, 'Decembrio traduttore', pp. 184–7.

⁶² SCHIRMER, pp. 31–3; WEISS, p. 51; SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, pp. 26–8.

teacher Francesco Filelfo.⁶³ Castiglionchio's career, on the other hand, is relatively well documented.⁶⁴ Born in 1406, this humanist was the scion of an impoverished Florentine noble family. Perceiving literary *otium* as an equivalent to the aristocratic way of life of his forebears, Castiglionchio from the late 1420s onwards focused on his literary education. After a brief stay at Bologna, where he acquired a first grounding in Greek, the humanist returned to Florence in the early 1430s to attend the Greek lectures of Francesco Filelfo at the *studio*. The advent of the Medici in 1434 marked a caesura in Castiglionchio's life: traditionally allied with the Albizzi, his family fell into disgrace and suffered financial sanctions. Fearful of further persecution, Castiglionchio left Florence some time during the first half of 1435 to join Filelfo at Siena, whence the professor had fled before the Medici coup. Penniless, Castiglionchio was forced to find employment. In the summer of 1435, he obtained a position in the service of Cardinal Giovanni Casanova. Having thus established himself in the curial environment, Castiglionchio, who was by then highly proficient in Greek, began to turn out translations of Plutarch's *Lives* and other occasional pieces which he dedicated to various curial dignitaries in the hope of recommending himself for a permanent position at the papal court.⁶⁵ Following Casanova's death in March 1436, Castiglionchio secured a position in the train of Cardinal Prospero Colonna. Barely a fortnight later, however, Colonna dismissed him for unknown reasons. In the following months Castiglionchio increasingly desperately sought to find a new situation. Attempts to succeed to Filelfo's lectureship at Siena or to win the patronage of Alfonso of Aragon came to nothing. In November 1436, however, Castiglionchio obtained a lectureship in rhetoric and moral philosophy at the university of Bologna. Yet a serious illness forced Castiglionchio to forsake his position shortly after the opening lecture. A job as majordomo of the household and tutor to the nephews of a high-ranking clerk of the papal *camera* tided the humanist over the following eleven months. Meanwhile, Castiglionchio renewed his attempts

⁶³ GIUSTINIANI, R., 'Sulle traduzioni latine delle *Vite* di Plutarco nel Quattrocento', *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser., i (1961), 3–62, p. 15n. For scarce information on Pacini's biography see *ibid.*, *passim*; WEISS, p. 52; COSENZA, s.v. 'Pacini, Antonio'.

⁶⁴ Unless otherwise marked, the following sketch of Castiglionchio's career is based on FUBINI, R. 'Castiglionchio, Lapo da, detto il Giovane', *DBI*, xxii (1979), 44–51.

⁶⁵ LUISSO, pp. 260–97; GIUSTINIANI, *passim*.

to secure a position in the papal administration. After the opening of the Council of Union in September 1437, he seems to have executed free-lance work as translator of conciliar documents in the papal *camera*; yet he was still without permanent employment.

During this period of insecurity, Castiglionchio was apprised of Zanone da Castiglione's quest to provide Gloucester with recent publications from Italy.⁶⁶ The young humanist immediately responded to this appeal: in autumn 1437, he dispatched his *Comparatio inter rem militarem et studia litterarum* and a selection of his recent translations of Isocrates and Plutarch to Gloucester. These presents were accompanied by a highly flattering covering letter in which Castiglionchio—almost certainly following instructions from Zanone—pandered to the duke's self-image as heroic protector of Henry VI and the Lancastrian legacy. At the same time, the humanist praised Zanone da Castiglione's commitment to Gloucester.⁶⁷

In autumn 1437, Castiglionchio had been out of luck professionally for almost a year; he may, therefore, have desperately grasped even for the vague promise of patronage from a far-away English duke; yet his principal interest during this period was, clearly, to win employment at the Curia. In October 1437, contemporaneously with his gifts to Gloucester, Castiglionchio dedicated his translation of Plutarch's *Aratus* to Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini.⁶⁸ Cesarini was not only one of the most generous patrons of humanism at the Curia during this period, but also a protégé of Cardinal Branda da Castiglione, the powerful uncle of Zanone da Castiglione.⁶⁹ It seems, therefore, highly likely that Castiglionchio complied with Zanone's wishes and sent his works to Gloucester not because he was intent on winning the patronage of the English duke, but because he hoped thereby to oblige Zanone in his capacity as a potential gatekeeper to the Castiglione-network at the Curia.

Castiglionchio would not have been alone in thus seeking indirect access to the Castiglione nexus: Antonio Pacini's dedication of his translation of Plutarch's *Marius* to Gloucester seems to have been contemporaneous with his dedication of a translation of the *Pelopidas*

⁶⁶ Above, Part Two, chapter thirteen, pp. 158–9.

⁶⁷ Ibid., WEISS, pp. 50–51; SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, pp. 26–7, pp. 165–71.

⁶⁸ GIUSTINIANI, p. 40; FUBINI, p. 48.

⁶⁹ Above, Part Two, chapter thirteen, pp. 152–4. For Cesarini's importance as a patron of letters see DA BISTICCI, i, 141–2; MOLS, 'Cesarini', p. 246.

to Cesarini; and even the lofty Guarino da Verona did not shy from penning an elegant eulogy of Gloucester's literary patronage precisely at the time that he was trying to obtain a papal favour through the mediation of Zanone and Branda da Castiglione.⁷⁰

Whether the efforts of Guarino and Pacini to oblige Zanone yielded any result is impossible to reconstruct; Castiglionchio, in any case, does seem to have benefited from his services to the bishop. Although he failed to secure a place in the train of Cesarini, he found, early in 1438, employment with Cardinal Giordano Orsini, one of Branda da Castiglione's colleagues in consistory.⁷¹ The humanist was not able to enjoy that position for long, for three months after he had entered Orsini's service, the cardinal died. Castiglionchio briefly found employment with the papal chamberlain Francesco Condulmer; but the ambiguity of his *Dialogus super Excellencia et Dignitate Curie Romana* which Castiglionchio dedicated to his new patron in September 1438 seems to have raised doubts about his commitment to curial service and the humanist was apparently once more out of work when, late in autumn 1438, he succumbed to an illness at the age of thirty-two.⁷² Castiglionchio was a minor figure at the time of his death; this does not, however, reflect on his literary abilities. His contemporaries agreed in the opinion that, had his career not been cut

⁷⁰ For Pacini's dedication to Cesarini see GIUSTINIANI, pp. 53–5. Pacini here addressed the prelate as cardinal of St Sabina. Based on the erroneous assumption that Cesarini only received that dignity in 1442, Giustiniani dated Pacini's translation to the early 1440s, *ibid.*, p. 23. Yet, contemporary sources first mention Cesarini as cardinal of St Sabina in February 1435, MOLS, R., 'Cesarini', pp. 239–40. In his dedication Pacini mentioned neither Cesarini's role at Basel nor his importance at the Council of Union, GIUSTINIANI, 55n. This suggests that he presented his work to the prelate sometime after Cesarini's rupture with the Council of Basel in January 1438 and before the cardinal's rise to prominence at Ferrara during the early summer of that year. This would make the text contemporaneous with Pacini's dedication of his translation of the *Marius* to Gloucester, *ibid.*, p. 30; SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, pp. 171–3. For Guarino's letter to Gloucester see *ibid.*, pp. 227–8. For Guarino's contacts with Zanone and his efforts to secure the support of the Castiglione-network see COLOMBO, C./KRISTELLER, P.O., 'Some New Additions to the Correspondence of Guarino of Verona', *IMU*, viii (1965), 213–48, at pp. 233–9.

⁷¹ FUBINI, 'Castiglionchio', p. 48. It has been impossible to establish a direct connection between Orsini and Branda, yet Orsini's links with England reached back at least to the Council of Pisa, HARVEY, pp. 131–2; his pronouncement in 1425 that Jacqueline of Hainault had been wrong to leave her first husband, *ibid.*, pp. 143–4 may have been an indication of his sympathies for Beaufort and in 1426 he succeeded Branda as legate in Germany. Therefore it seems not unlikely that Orsini was associated with the Castiglione/Beaufort connection.

⁷² FUBINI, 'Castiglionchio', pp. 48–50.

short by his premature death, Castiglionchio might have become one of the leading humanists of his generation.⁷³

Unlike Pier Candido Decembrio, who used Rolando Talenti in order to win Gloucester's patronage and thereby to increase both his scholarly reputation and his income, Castiglionchio and Pacini thus apparently sent their works to Gloucester in the hope of obliging the duke's middleman, Zanone da Castiglione, in his capacity as a gatekeeper to the Castiglione network at the Curia. Accordingly, the seeming dedication of these humanists to Gloucester should not be seen as proof of their zeal to win a foreign patron or of their ambition to enter the duke's service in England, but as one more stratagem in their indefatigable quest for permanent employment in Italy.

⁷³ DA BISTICCI, i, 582, "[Castiglionchio] era in tutto Firenze et in tutta la corte di Roma assai noto, et ebbe da Papa Eugenio ch'egli fusse son segretario, et non so che altro uficio; et era tanto amato in corte et da cardinali et da altri prelati, che, s'egli fussi vivuto, arebbe aquista qualche dignità maggiore in corte di Roma."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

WERE THEY PUSHED OR DID THEY JUMP? THE REASONS FOR ITALIAN HUMANISTS TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT IN ENGLAND 1418 TO 1445. POGGIO BRACCIOLINI, TITO LIVIO FRULOVISI AND ANTONIO BECCARIA

Humanists who were more enterprising than Decembrio, Castiglionchio and Pacini did not remain in Italy but tried to find employment outside the peninsula. During the late 1410s and early 1420s Poggio Bracciolini, a prominent member of the first generation of Quattrocento humanists, stayed in the household of Henry Beaufort; some twenty years later, Tito Livio Frulovisi and Antonio Beccaria, two representatives of the second generation, successively held the office of “poeta et orator” of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester. Traditionally, the English sojourns of these humanists are presented either as periods of involuntary exile or as an indication of their inability to hold their own in the competitive Italian market. Such readings cast the humanists as passive figures who, having been forced out of Italy by circumstances that were beyond their control, stood little to gain in England. Against this interpretation, it is here proposed that the humanists who ventured north during the second quarter of the fifteenth century did not necessarily perceive their English service as a forced exile but actively embraced it as a chance to attain economic and literary independence or as an opportunity to gather foreign work experience and thus to gain a qualification that would enhance their long term chances in Italy.

The investigation opens with an examination of Poggio Bracciolini’s stay in the service of Henry Beaufort between 1418 and 1423 and its effects on the humanist’s further professional biography. Building on the findings of this analysis, the study then proposes a revision of Tito Livio Frulovisi’s career and his service in Gloucester’s household. As a counterpoint to the biographical sketches of the lay clerks Poggio and Frulovisi, an examination of the relations between Gloucester and the cleric Antonio Beccaria rounds off the inquiry.

From autumn 1418 to spring 1423 Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) served in the household of Cardinal Beaufort in England. Poggio had been propelled to the forefront of the humanist movement by his recovery of unknown classical texts during the Council of Constance. Yet notwithstanding the rich holdings of English monastic libraries, he failed to repeat his earlier triumphs during his four-and-a-half-years' stay in England. The erstwhile author of a lively description of the secular pleasures of the baths at Baden apparently considered entering the priesthood and, generally of a sociable disposition, Poggio seems to have made no effort to venture beyond Beaufort's household to establish contacts with literary circles in England; instead he contented himself with passing sarcastic comments on the alleged backwardness of English cultural life in his lengthy letters home. Poggio's years in England have, therefore, been perceived as a period of intellectual stagnation, a regrettable mistake without consequence for his biography or for the further course of English humanism.¹

This interpretation is challenged by new evidence from the Vatican Archive. Within weeks of his return from England in spring 1423, Poggio was appointed as a papal secretary and he kept that office for three decades. His activity during these thirty years can be reconstructed on the basis of his secretarial registers. A quantitative analysis of these registers and those of Poggio's four most senior colleagues in the papal secretariat suggests that between 1423 and 1453, Poggio alone drafted almost fifty per cent of the secretariat's outgoing correspondence to England and the English territories in France.² A study which charts year by year Poggio's share in the secretariat's English correspondence and compares it with that of his colleagues shows that between 1423 and 1447 there were only seven years during which Poggio executed either less or the same amount of English correspondence than his colleagues. During the remaining twenty-four years, the humanist continuously executed more of the secretariat's English correspondence than Antonio Loschi, Andrea da Florentia, Bartolomeo Roverella or Flavio Biondo.³

This evidence suggests that Poggio was head of the English section in the papal secretariat, and it seems highly likely that he was

¹ WALSER, pp. 71–84; SCHIRMER, pp. 10–19; WEISS, pp. 13–21; ROSSI, p. 7; RUNDLE, 'Virtue and Weiss', pp. 184–9; DAVIES, 'Friends and Enemies', p. 6.

² Appendix I, diagram 3 and introduction to Appendix I.

³ Ibid. and Appendix I, diagrams 4 and 5.

appointed to that position because of his previous working-experience in England. The material security and other privileges of his curial office allowed Poggio, in turn, to cultivate his literary interests and to adopt a way of life equal to that of his friends in the Florentine patriciate. Far from being an inconsequential episode, Poggio's stay in England was thus apparently of pivotal importance for his further biography.

Poggio's English years therefore need to be reconsidered, albeit not with a view to the humanist's literary activity, but with regard to the his professional ambitions. This is the objective of the following examination. Three questions guide the analysis: What decided Poggio to join Beaufort's service? What did he do in England? Finally, why did he return to Italy? It is here proposed that Poggio entered Beaufort's service because he hoped thereby to secure his economic independence after he had lost his previous position in the papal chancery. When this hope came to nothing, Poggio began shrewdly to exploit his position in England to bargain for an elevated office in the papal *camera*.

The only direct evidence for Poggio's English years is an incomplete series of letters the humanist wrote from England to his friend Niccolò Niccoli, the retired heir of a wealthy Florentine wool manufacturer who had opened his house with its internationally renowned library and exquisite collection of artefacts from antiquity as a meeting place for scholars and patrons of the arts.⁴ This is not the place for a reassessment of Poggio's relations with Niccoli, yet there is reason to believe that the *amicitia* between the two men was not, as has hitherto been assumed, a disinterested friendship, but a mutually profitable client/patron relationship.⁵ Travelling abroad, Poggio put his adroitness in recouping rare manuscripts from foreign libraries at the service of Niccoli, who, from Florence, systematically organised the recovery, editing and transcription of unknown texts for

⁴ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i (Lettere a Niccolò Niccoli), 5–57.

⁵ On Niccoli see e.g. ZIPPEL, G., 'Niccolò Niccoli contributo alla storia dell'umanesimo', private publication, (Florence, 1890), revised reprint in, ZIPPEL, G. (ed.), *Storia e Cultura del Rinascimento Italiano*, Medioevo e Umanesimo, xxxiii (Padua 1979), 68–157; MARTINES, pp. 160–5 and passim; ULLMAN, B.L./STADTER, P.A., *The Public Library of Renaissance Florence. Niccolò Niccoli, Cosimo de' Medici and the Library of San Marco* (Padua, 1972); DE LA MARE, A.C., *The Handwriting of the Italian Humanists* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 44–61; DAVIES, 'Friends and Enemies', passim. For the established interpretation of Poggio's relations with Niccoli see WALSER, pp. 90–91 and Harth's introduction to BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, xiv.

himself and an exclusive circle of gentlemen-clients.⁶ In return, Niccoli protected Poggio's interests in Florence and acted as his advisor and agent in professional matters.⁷ As his client, Poggio could not always be entirely frank with Niccoli. Thus to retain Niccoli's goodwill despite his protracted failure to procure exciting codices from English libraries, the humanist fell back on subterfuges and, fearful of the opprobrium of his high-minded mentor, Poggio did not always disclose to Niccoli the full extent of his professional ambitions.⁸ Therefore the present investigation subjects Poggio's letters to a close reading that focuses particularly on discrepancies and echoes of other voices in his account. Wherever possible, the correspondence has been correlated with documentary evidence, mainly from the Vatican. The aim of this close reading is to show that although Poggio temporarily ceased to engage in his literary pursuits during his stay in England, he laid the foundations for his later career as one of the leading humanists of his age. This, in turn, may have encouraged subsequent generations of humanists to consider foreign service as a stepping stone toward a successful career in Italy.

Born in 1380, Poggio trained as a notary in Florence. In 1403 his mentor, the Florentine chancellor Coluccio Salutati, secured his appointment as *scriptor* and *abbreviator* in the papal chancery. Poggio slowly worked his way up and at the close of the pontificate of John XXIII, he seems semi-officially to have been assumed to the papal secretariat.⁹ Few other appointments in Quattrocento Italy offered equally attractive working conditions for humanists. As *familiares* of the Pope, the secretaries commanded a prestigious and powerful position at the Curia; their work as publicists and executors of the most politically sensitive papal correspondence was challenging and interesting yet left them enough spare time to cultivate their literary interests; meanwhile the generous emoluments from their work, supplemented

⁶ SABBADINI, *Le scoperte*, i, 75–84; STADTER, P.A., 'Niccolò Niccoli: Winning back the Knowledge of the Ancients', in AVESANI, R./FERRARI, M./FOFFANO, T. (eds.) *Vestigia*, ii, 747–64; FOFFANO, T., 'Niccoli, Cosimo e le ricerche di Poggio nelle biblioteche francesi', *IMU*, xii (1969), 113–28.

⁷ Discussed below, pp. 244–51.

⁸ For his subterfuges concerning his abortive search for manuscripts see RUNDLE, 'Virtue and Weiss', pp. 185–6. For the partial concealment of his professional ambitions, below, pp. 244–51.

⁹ WALSER, pp. 1–70; HOFMANN, ii, 110.

by unofficial rewards in the shape of bribes and gifts, liberated them from financial cares.¹⁰

Therefore it came as a heavy blow for Poggio when in winter 1417/8 he failed to secure his appointment to the secretarial team of the newly elected Martin V. In his late thirties at the time, the humanist did not resign himself to his relegation to the rank and file of *scriptores* and *abbreviatores* but determined from now on to adopt a pragmatic approach to his professional future. "Sed et ego . . . paulo tepidior factus sum in hac cura perquirendi novos libros", he would later declare to Niccoli,

Tempus est iam de somno surgere ac danda opera, ut aliquid mihi prodesse ad vitam et mores illi, quos habemus, et quos quotidie legimus. Nam congregare semper ligna, lapides, cementa, stultissimum videri potest, si nihil edifices ex illis.¹¹

Already during the Council of Constance Poggio seems to have made the acquaintance of Henry Beaufort.¹² In December 1417, the English prelate had been promoted to consistory in recognition of his role in the election of Martin V.¹³ The new cardinal was expected to play a key role in Anglo-Papal relations. He would thus undoubtedly have been interested in recruiting the services of a clerk like Poggio, who combined an intimate knowledge of curial administration with useful contacts in the papal *camera* and chancery; and as one of the wealthiest and most powerful ecclesiastical princes of contemporary Europe, Beaufort would have been able to offer the humanist highly attractive working conditions.¹⁴ Early in 1418 Poggio therefore

¹⁰ On the duties, the social status and the income of the secretaries see BRESSLAU, i, 312–20, pp. 323–4; OTTENTHAL, pp. 61–3; TANGL, M., 'Das Taxwesen der päpstlichen Kanzlei vom 13. bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts', *MIÖG*, xiii (1892), 1–106, at pp. 61–9; HOFMANN, i, 144–8, ii, 155–62; FRENZ, pp. 319–24; PARTNER, P., *The Pope's Men. The Papal Civil Service in the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 26–8, p. 54, pp. 70–71. For their literary attainments see VOIGT, ii, 1–44; DIENER, *passim*; GUALDO, 'Umanesimo e segretari Apostolici', *passim*.

¹¹ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 35 (12 February 1421).

¹² WALSER, pp. 45–6.

¹³ MCFARLANE, 'Henry V, Beaufort and the Red Hat', pp. 316–22; HARRISS, pp. 91–5.

¹⁴ SCHIRMER, p. 12. On the practice of cardinals to employ former *curiales* in their chanceries, SCHWARZ, B., *Die Organisation kurialer Schreiberkollegien von ihrer Entstehung bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, xxxvii (Tübingen, 1972), p. 175n. For the sort of services which Beaufort may have expected from Poggio see above, Part One, chapter nine, pp. 118–9.

determined to forsake the relative security of a subordinate function at the Curia and to accept the offer of a position in Beaufort's service. Commenting on his resolution, he wrote in spring 1418:

linquo crudeles terras et littus avarum
 queroque patriam
 alio sub sole iacentem
 et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos

Grave est mihi, sed illud multo gravius, videri indignos quousque promoveri deprimi bonos, praeterea: ubi non sis, qui esse soleas, non esse cur esse velis?¹⁵

Poggio had precise ideas about who he wanted to be or, rather, how he wanted to live: in his earliest surviving letter from England he congratulated Niccolò Niccoli on his complete retirement from the family business, praising literary *otium* as an ideal way of life to which he also aspired.¹⁶ Yet, whereas Niccoli had inherited a considerable fortune, Poggio, the son of a modest provincial apothecary, did not command the necessary means to realise his dream of the Good Life.¹⁷

In the late middle ages, probably the only chance for a clerk of Poggio's social background to achieve financial independence would have been investment with an ecclesiastical benefice. To be eligible for such a benefice, the humanist would have had to take holy orders; yet, feeling unable to live up to the high standards he himself expected from the clergy, Poggio was, like many of his humanist peers, reluctant to enter the priesthood.¹⁸ Fortunately, contemporary practice provided a loophole for such unwilling clerics in the form of sinecures

¹⁵ To Francesco Barbaro, cf. CLARK, A.C., 'The Literary Discoveries of Poggio', *The Classical Review*, xiii (1899) 119–29, at p. 125.

¹⁶ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 223, (winter 1419/20), "Te quidem laudo, qui auctionem fecisti, ut sis liberior. Eligendus est aliquis locus quietus, qui non irritet appetitum; nam hec loca insignia suspecta sunt [. . .]."

O rus, quando ego te aspiciam? vel quando licebit
 nunc veterum libris, nunc somno, nunc inertibus horis
 ducere sollicite iocunda oblivia vite?

O noctes ceneque deum, quibus ipse meique
 ante larem proprium vescor . . .

Hec mihi, Nicolae, vita est dulcissima, quam si sequi volueris, nunquam deero."

¹⁷ WALSER, pp. 1–17; MARTINES, pp. 123–4.

¹⁸ On Poggio's views on the clergy see FUBINI, R., 'Un orazione di Poggio Bracciolini sui vizi del clero scritto al tempo del concilio di Costanza', *GSLI*, cxlii (1965), 24–33; TRINKAUS, C., 'Humanist Treatises on the Status of the Religious', in id., *The Scope of Italian Renaissance Humanism* (Ann Arbor, 1983), pp. 195–236.

and special dispensations from pastoral duties. During the first half of the fifteenth century, high-ranking members of the English government frequently relied on this option to provide for their secular clerks.¹⁹ Poggio's retrospective avowal,

Volebam ego demens statuere mihi vitam, ut esset unde viverem sine labore, tanquam sacerdotes solent. [...] Recusabam ego homuncio scribere paulum, ut victum quererem.²⁰

may, therefore, suggest that he had been lured into Beaufort's service by the prospect of an English sinecure.

Whatever accord had been reached between Beaufort and Poggio early in 1418, neither man could have foreseen that by the time the humanist finally joined Beaufort's service some eight months later, his new master's political fortunes were about to change dramatically. Unwilling to accord Beaufort a status that would have invested the prelate with equal powers in the ecclesiastical sphere as he himself enjoyed in the secular domain, Henry V had suppressed Beaufort's bull of promotion to consistory. An emergency meeting between Beaufort and Henry V at Rouen in winter 1418 failed to dispel the king's misgivings. Beaufort was forced to forsake the Red Hat; and, formerly Henry V's leading diplomat, he was now put under close surveillance, which continued even after he returned to England in the late summer of 1419.²¹

For Poggio, Beaufort's fall from grace meant that instead of accompanying a powerful cardinal and leading European diplomat on his international missions, he found himself in the train of a politically discredited bishop in England. Moreover, Beaufort's relegation had radically diminished Poggio's prospects of an English sinecure. By winter 1419/20 the humanist therefore regretted his move to England and announced his intention to return to Italy in the coming spring.²² But as spring came and went, Poggio remained in England. The humanist's assignments in Beaufort's household during this period or in the following three years of his English stay are impossible to reconstruct. Possibly he was charged with his master's Latin correspondence;

¹⁹ STOREY, R.L., 'Gentleman-bureaucrats', in CLOUGH, C.H./MYERS, R.A. (eds.), *Profession, vocation, and culture in later medieval England* (Liverpool, 1982), pp. 90–121, at pp. 102–4.

²⁰ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 223 (to Niccoli, winter 1419/20).

²¹ Above, Part One, chapter three, p. 35.

²² BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 222–4 (to Niccoli).

yet in the absence of Beaufort's register this hypothesis cannot be verified and Poggio's allusions to long periods of idleness suggest rather that most of the time Beaufort had no use for the services of his Italian clerk. None the less, Poggio seems to have been retained in style: "Providetur mihi pro victu et vestitu idque est satis; neque enim amplius vel rex ex hoc tanto apparatu rerum capit", he proudly reported in March 1420.²³ These advantages apparently reconciled the humanist with his English lot. In July 1420 he declared:

Id me consolatur, quod tempus non omnino effluit, quin aliquid addam ad cumulum lucri litterarum, scilicet studia, quibus quotidie vaco; est enim mihi otium satis ad legendum, nam herus peregre abest ut Scythia, ego hic operior quietus et negotiis vacuus. Ubi vero terrarum vivas, si bene vivas satis est; nam si apud vos essem, paulum mehercule amplius facultatis haberem legendi. Id mihi deest iocundissimum: amicorum consuetudo et presertim tua. Hoc mihi ceteris molestie plus affert, reliqua pene communia. Nam patria me parum movet. Ego enim semper verissimam illam reputavi sententiam: patria est ubi bene est.²⁴

Yet, despite the momentary comfort of his situation, Poggio had not forgotten his dream of financial independence. Beaufort's political difficulties made it unlikely that the humanist would be able to realise that dream in England. Therefore in summer 1420, Poggio encouraged Niccoli in Florence to establish contacts with high-ranking officials at the Curia and to take soundings concerning his return to papal service.²⁵

Within a few weeks, Poggio received favourable news from Florence: the powerful cardinal Alamanno Adimario had given Niccoli assurances that the humanist would be welcome to resume his former position as *scriptor* and *abbreviator* in the papal chancery.²⁶ Presumably

²³ Ibid., p. 9 (to Niccoli). Compare also STOREY, *passim* on the high social status enjoyed by clerks in the service of the English court and its environs. Probably it was his status as retainer and not, as RUNDLE, 'Virtue and Weiss', pp. 185–7, proposed, amorous entanglements or health problems which kept Poggio from making discoveries in English monastic libraries: as a retainer Poggio would not have been able to travel around freely, and given Beaufort's delicate political situation during this period, it is doubtful whether the prelate would have been happy to grant his predatory Italian clerk library privileges in England.

²⁴ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 15 (17 July 1420).

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 10–14 (13 June 1420).

²⁶ Ibid., p. 18 (24 October 1420), p. 23 (30 November 1421). Appointments to the papal chancery were for life, SCHWARZ, B., *Die Organisation kurialer Schreiberkollegien von ihrer Entstehung bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Institutes in Rom, xxxvii (Tübingen, 1972), pp. 171–4; when Poggio had left for

this offer held little attraction for Poggio. Previously he had held his "officiolum" in the chancery in such contempt that he had willingly abandoned it for a position in Beaufort's service and in the meantime he had come to appreciate certain aspects of his English assignment. Moreover, within days after Poggio had received Adimario's news, Beaufort was readmitted to Henry V's royal council.²⁷ His master's rehabilitation apparently revived Poggio's hopes that he might yet be able to secure an English benefice. Yet, having learned from his previous experience, the humanist did not reject outright the offer of a place in the curial chancery in favour of his position in Beaufort's train. Instead Poggio, between October 1420 and February 1422, skilfully played off his English master against Adimario until Beaufort invested him with a benefice in England and the Roman cardinal guaranteed him a position in the papal secretariat.

Poggio's dealings with Beaufort are not documented; but circumstantial evidence makes it possible to trace the humanist's moves in England in the following fourteen months. In autumn 1421, Simone da Teramo, the erstwhile papal collector in England, returned to Italy with the news that Poggio was intent on entering the priesthood. Only seven months earlier, the humanist had protested his abhorrence of the religious life; da Teramo's reports therefore caused a stir amongst Poggio's friends. Called upon to clarify his position, the humanist reaffirmed his unwillingness to take holy orders and claimed that da Teramo had misunderstood him.²⁸ Yet given that Poggio had previously designated da Teramo as his closest confidant in England, a misunderstanding on such a vital issue as the priesthood appears unlikely.²⁹ Therefore, it is here proposed that in his relations with the collector, Poggio had deliberately created the impression that he was prepared to take holy orders.

What could have been the rationale for such a subterfuge? Papal confirmations of provisions to English benefices during the first quarter of the fifteenth century show that it was possible for a man in minor orders to obtain a benefice in England on condition that he agree to take holy orders within a year after entering possession of

England, he therefore had theoretically only resigned from active service at the Curia.

²⁷ MCFARLANE, 'Henry V, Beaufort, and the Red Hat', pp. 340-43; HARRISS, pp. 99-100.

²⁸ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 24 (30 November 1421).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41 (29 July 1421); p. 43 (3 October 1421).

his prebend.³⁰ Apprised of this possibility, Poggio may have determined to signal his willingness to enter the priesthood to da Teramo, so that the collector, who apparently doubled as Poggio's agent in his relations with Beaufort, would support his cause with his English master.³¹ The ultimate objective of such a *démarche* would have been for Poggio to achieve his appointment to an English benefice. If the humanist by this stratagem managed to secure his provision to a prebend, he would be able to enjoy its fruits for at least a year. During this period, he could try to exchange it for a sinecure that would allow him to forego his ordination. Yet even if he failed to effect such an exchange, he would be in no way bound to his promise to take holy orders. At worst he would have to resign his benefice at the end of twelve months.³² In that case, however, he could always cut his losses in England and return to his previous position at the Curia. This seems to be implicit in Poggio's statement to Niccoli:

Neque ego a priori sententia descisco, neque mutatus sum, ut arbitraris; non reputo sacerdotium libertatem, ut multi, sed maximam ac gravissimam servitutem. Neque existimes me ita levem, ut velim propter rem levissimam [i.e. beneficium] et que in diem a me posset auferri, subire gravissimum onus et quod nisi cum vita non esset admittendum [i.e. sacerdotium] . . . Sed quedam sunt modice cure et nullius ponderis, que salva conscientia haberi possunt; que, licet parva, si consecutus fuisset, ad vos saltem tempore futuri concilii revertissem.³³

Meanwhile, the humanist was playing for time with Adimario. Upon his reception of the cardinal's offer to resume his former office as *scriptor* and *abbreviator*, Poggio had expressed his delight at the idea of a homecoming to the Curia and he had announced his intention to leave England as soon as possible.³⁴ In the following thirteen

³⁰ In 1421 alone, fifteen men in minor orders were confirmed in their benefices after they had been granted dispensation to take holy orders. During the same period, four clerks had to resign from their benefices because they had failed to enter the priesthood within a year, *CPL*, vii, 160–8, 174–5, 178, 181, 186–7, 197, 209.

³¹ On da Teramo's role as advocate of Poggio's interests with Beaufort see BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 43 (3 October 1421).

³² Compare STOREY, R.L., 'Gentleman-bureaucrats', in CLOUGH, C.H./MYERS, R.A. (eds.), *Profession, vocation, and culture in later medieval England* (Liverpool, 1982), pp. 90–121, at pp. 102–4, on the process of secularization in the royal chancery which suggests that during this period many English clerks resorted to similar stratagems as Poggio.

³³ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 24–5 (30 November 1421).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18 (24 October 1420).

months, however, the humanist postponed his return to Italy at least six times, variously blaming his dithering on adverse weather conditions, the political instability of the Curia, problematic travelling arrangements, or political events in England.³⁵

Poggio needed the time thus won to bargain with Adimario over the terms of his future employment; for the humanist was determined to return to Rome as no less than a papal secretary. In autumn 1420, Poggio's claims to that office were based on barely more than his ambition. Even under John XXIII, the humanist had apparently never been an official member of the papal secretariat.³⁶ His failure to secure a post in the secretarial team of Martin V in 1417/18 suggests that Poggio's relations with the new pope had been strained, and by going to England the humanist had further distanced himself from the curial environment. Poggio's quest for the secretaryship thus only stood a chance if he managed to turn the odds in his favour. This the humanist achieved with consummate skill.

Focusing once more on his concern either to attain the financial independence necessary for a life of literary *otium* or to find employment that satisfied his professional and personal ambitions, Poggio emphasised the advantages of his current situation in England.³⁷ At the same time, he denied the attractions of the Curia. When Adimario sharply cautioned him early in autumn 1421 that any further delay of his return to Italy might cost him his opening in the papal chancery, the humanist boldly retorted: "morari in curia et in eo officio est preter finem meum . . . cupio enim me aliquando eximere a servitute, et eo loci esset principium serviendi perpetuo."³⁸ Two months after this daring manoeuvre, Poggio ostensibly atoned for his brusqueness. He avowed his inability to envisage a satisfying professional career outside the papal service and insinuated that he had hitherto postponed his return to Rome solely for fear that the acceptance of an inferior position in the chancery might jeopardize his prospects for an appointment to the papal secretariat.³⁹ Poggio's hint yielded

³⁵ Ibid., p. 21 (29 October 1420); p. 34 (12 February 1421); p. 38, p. 41 (19 July 1421); pp. 28–9 (30 November 1421); p. 31 (12 December 1421).

³⁶ HOFMANN, ii, 110.

³⁷ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 38 (4 June 1421), "Officii mei emolumenta ita parva sunt, ut ex illis nemo queat victum parare. Si autem servitio querenda est vita, malo hic servire quam alibi, ubi et minus dura est servitus et minime pudenda."

³⁸ Ibid., p. 43.

³⁹ Ibid. (17 December 1421), p. 32–3, "Nescio [. . .], quid agere possim extra

the desired effect: in February 1422, Adimario signalled a possible opening in the secretariat. Yet this was not the only success Poggio secured in that period: approximately at the same time, Beaufort invested him with a benefice. Furthermore, at the initiative of Niccolò Niccoli, Piero Lamberteschi, a Florentine merchant, offered Poggio a position in the service of king Sigismund in Hungary.⁴⁰

Poggio refused to make his choice between these potentially attractive offers; instead he determined to maximize his advantage by keeping all three options open for as long as possible. In his letters to Niccoli he denied any further interest in the apostolic secretaryship and signalled his eagerness to accept Sigismund's offer provided he received written securities concerning the exact terms of his future employment.⁴¹ Meanwhile, he swore Niccoli to utmost secrecy.⁴² Such secrecy was necessary to prevent irritation on the part of Adimario, with whom Poggio continued to negotiate his assumption to the papal secretariat. Apparently managed by da Teramo, these negotiations were clearly conducted behind Niccoli's back; after February 1422, Poggio's correspondence with his Florentine agent therefore contains only fragmentary information on his dealings with Adimario.⁴³ In spring 1422, the humanist alluded to some pending business that necessitated his presence in Rome; he determined 24 June, the Feast of St John, as the latest date for his return, but made his departure dependent on important news from the Curia which he expected around Easter.⁴⁴ By mid-May, this intelligence, coupled with a recommendation to remain in England until the Council of Pavia, had apparently reached London, for Poggio now postponed his departure until spring 1423.⁴⁵

curiam [papalis] . . . Omiseram, quod iniecit mihi magnum stimulum remanendi. Nam olim scripsisti mihi cardinalem Pisanum ad te scripsisse, me inventurum ostium clausum, qui diutius tardassem. Intellexi hoc de secretariatu, de quo ipsemet scripserat. Nolui ergo omnes aditus intercludere mihi et persertim istum, qui adhuc erat apertus."

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 45–7 (22 February 1422). For the identification of the Hungarian patron with Sigismund see DAVIES, M.C., 'Poggio Bracciolini as Rhetorician and Historian: Unpublished Pieces', *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser., xxi (1982), 153–82, at pp. 167–8.

⁴¹ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 46 (22 February 1422), 48–9 (5 March 1422).

⁴² Ibid., pp. 46–7 (22 February 1422), p. 49 (5 March 1422).

⁴³ Da Teramo had apparently replaced Niccoli as Poggio's main contact with Adimario by late 1421, compare *ibid.*, p. 32 (12–17 December 1421).

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 46 (22 February 1422), p. 49 (5 March 1422), p. 51 (16 March 1422).

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 52 (25 May 1422), p. 54 (10 June 1422).

Poggio's tergiversations gain coherence against the backdrop of evidence from the Curia. On 15 October 1421, Martin V had requested a list of all pending vacancies in the papal chancery together with suggestions for new provisions. A sub-section specified the Feast of St John 1422 as deadline for rightful claims to vacant positions.⁴⁶ The list was to be submitted by Easter 1422, when a commission of cardinals, who were charged with devising a comprehensive programme of curial reform, would meet to discuss the reorganisation of the papacy's clerical administration. The cardinals met late in March 1422 and determined that the intended reforms should be instituted at the Council of Pavia, scheduled to convene in spring 1423.⁴⁷

The intriguing coincidence of these dates with those of his planned departure from England suggests that Poggio coordinated his moves with the reform plans in Rome: a return by the Feast of St John would have allowed the humanist to safeguard his claim to the post of *scriptor* and *abbreviator*. Yet his reluctance to leave England before Easter 1422, and the subsequent postponement of his departure until the council of Pavia indicate that Poggio's primary concern was not to resume his previous position in the chancery. Apparently, the humanist had reason to expect that his case would be favourably considered during the meeting of cardinals in March 1422, and he seems to have received guarantees that the reforms that were to be implemented at the Council of Pavia would benefit his promotion to the papal secretariat.

Meanwhile, Poggio saw to his interests in England. Early in March 1422, Beaufort had transferred him from his first "beneficiolo" to the lucrative curacy of Droxford.⁴⁸ After almost four years in England, Poggio had thus at last come tantalisingly close to realising his original ambition of economic independence. He had yet to exchange Droxford for a sinecure so that he could be released from his promise to enter the priesthood and enjoy his income unencumbered by residence requirements.⁴⁹ Wary that an open avowal of his plans would provoke irritations with Beaufort, Poggio contrived an indirect approach to cover his retreat. In spring 1422, he revealed to Niccoli that he would initially request only a temporary leave from Beaufort; once

⁴⁶ OTTENTHAL, p. 216.

⁴⁷ HOFMANN, i, 12; TANGL, M., *Die päpstlichen Kanzleiordnungen von 1200–1500* (Innsbruck, 1894), pp. 146–60.

⁴⁸ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 46 (22 February 1422), 49 (5 March 1422).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 52–3 (25 May 1422).

back in Italy, he would then make it clear that he had no intention of returning to England.⁵⁰

During the first half of 1422, Poggio thus juggled three alternatives for his future career; how carefully he hedged his bets, transpires from a letter he wrote to Niccoli in the early summer:

Posteaquam assecutus fui hoc beneficium quesivi semper illud permutare pro alio, quod careat cura, quod adhuc non reperio et in hoc omnem adhibeo diligentiam. Cum primum id fecero, ad vos proficiscar, sin vero nequeam reperire quod cupio, expectabo quoad habeam responsum a Petro, quid certi afferat in re nostra. Et si quidem scribet, prout spero, non morabor amplius hoc beneficium habens loco maleficii. At si non posset perficere, que obtulerat, necessitate compulsus, hic expectabo usque ad concilium futurum intentus interim permutationi quam dixi. Non enim videtur mihi esse sani consilii relinquere hoc parum, quod sum tanto labore consecutus, sub spe quadam, que nos posset fallere.⁵¹

Poggio's epistolary remains silent on his movements during the period from July 1422 to mid-February 1423. External evidence suggests, however, that having reached a satisfactory settlement concerning his benefice, Poggio indeed orchestrated the gradual retreat from England he had laid out earlier and returned to Rome just in time for the opening of the Council of Pavia in spring 1423.⁵²

As Adimario had succumbed to the plague a few months before Poggio's return, the humanist could no longer rely on the cardinal's support in Rome. But there is reason to believe that the humanist had yet another powerful protector at the Curia. In a letter to Niccoli of 1421/2, Poggio had alluded to an unnamed, yet apparently influential friend at the papal court.⁵³ It is tempting to identify this

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 49 (5 March).

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 54 (10 June 1422).

⁵² Apparently Poggio failed to conclude an exchange of Droxford for a canonry and prebend in Bordeaux worth 100 *livres tournois* per annum before his departure from England. He therefore seems to have sold his expectation of this French benefice to his friend Richard Petworth, in whose favour he resigned the canonry and prebend immediately after he had received it early in 1423, WALSER, pp. 334–5. When Poggio first arrived in Rome he was allegedly sporting pilgrim's clothes, *ibid.* p. 85. Perhaps he had pretended to Beaufort that he wished to undertake a pilgrimage to Rome to profit from the indulgences proclaimed on the occasion of the jubilee of 1423. This would tally with Poggio's earlier remark BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 46 (22 February 1422), that he intended to return to Italy "impensa crucifixi."

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 23–4 (30 November 1421, with reference to the reasons that had encouraged him to accept Beaufort's offer in 1418), "Addebatur quoque spes quedam amici, quem non nominavi tibi, qui cum cuperet me esse secum, ultro promisit

éminence grise with Branda da Castiglione. Poggio's acquaintance with Branda may have dated back to the early 1410s, when the cardinal had presided over the papal chancery; almost certainly, however, the two men had met during the Council of Constance.⁵⁴ Moreover, Branda had been a close friend of Adimario and he was connected with da Teramo.⁵⁵ Finally, the collaboration between the Castiglione cardinal and Henry Beaufort would have made it mutually advantageous for the two prelates to launch an erstwhile *familiaris* of Beaufort and a client of Branda as an agent in the papal secretariat.⁵⁶

Yet even without Branda's patronage, Poggio would have stood a good chance of appointment to the papal secretariat: Anglo-Papal relations were strained during this period, and in view of Beaufort's leading role in the conciliar government that had been established in England in December 1422, it would have been opportune for Martin V to recruit a clerk for his secretarial team who had served in Beaufort's chancery and who had thus gained some insights into the workings of English politics.⁵⁷

None the less, Poggio was anxious not to relinquish his options in Hungary before he was firmly established at the Curia. Therefore he systematically ignored Niccoli's increasingly impatient enquiries concerning the exact nature of his activities in Rome until he could at last announce in May 1423: "Ego effectus sum secretarius pontificis et quidem nullius precibus vel admodum paucis. Id mihi placet ob recuperatam dignitatem, qua olim fueram potitus."⁵⁸

multa, que non servavit: hic etiam, qui totiens deieravit promissis suis, me hortabatur, ut secum essem, asserens se facturum multa; cui etsi non bene credebam, tamen nonnihil me movebat, quia videbam id facile futurum, quod offerebat, si in proposito perseveraret."

⁵⁴ SABBADINI, *Le scoperte*, i, 79n claims that Branda may have been one of the patrons of Poggio's third book-hunting expedition to libraries in Switzerland of January 1417. For Poggio's own allusions to his longstanding connections with Branda see above, Part Two, chapter thirteen, p. 148.

⁵⁵ Branda's close relations with Adimario can be inferred from a postscriptum to a papal brief, in which Martin V expressed his condolences to Branda about Adimario's recent death, Paris, Archives Nationales, LL4 a, f. 29v, printed by FINK, pp. 186-7, "doleamus plurium etiam tuo dolore commovemur, quo te arbitramur affligi, tam dulcissimo fratre tuo absente te mortuo." For da Teramo's connection with Branda see above, Part Two, chapter thirteen, p. 150n.

⁵⁶ On the Beaufort/Castiglione connection, see above, Part Two, chapter thirteen, pp. 149-52.

⁵⁷ On Anglo-Papal relations in the early 1420s see HARVEY, p. 42, pp. 130-7; HARRISS, pp. 115-33.

⁵⁸ BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 62 (15 May 1423).

In the ensuing three decades, the majority of the Popes' political correspondence with England went through his hands.⁵⁹ Since the secretaries were entrusted with the formulation of that part of papal correspondence that was considered too sensitive to be submitted to the legalistic rigour of chancery procedure, Poggio was also ideally placed as Beaufort's informant at the Curia. Early in 1424, the humanist ran into trouble with the official English proctor at the papal court, Thomas Polton, after he had channelled classified information from Rome to his former master in England.⁶⁰ After this public *éclat* Poggio apparently handled his relations with Beaufort more discreetly. His correspondence with the cardinal and members of his entourage until well into the 1440s are, however, suggestive of the continued good understanding between the papal secretary and the English prelate. The same seems to apply to Poggio's connection with the Castiglione clan.⁶¹

Poggio clearly savoured his position at the Curia. When he was offered the prestigious Florentine chancellorship in 1427, he declined without hesitation: "Ego satis habeo et honoris et lucri", he declared:

Non cupio divitem fieri, hoc est valde opulentum; nam dives quidem sum [. . .]. Regnum non est tanti, ut statum pro eo velim mutare. Sum

⁵⁹ Below, Appendix i, diagrams 1–5.

⁶⁰ For this incident compare Poggio's letter to Simone da Teramo of 10 February 1424 in which Poggio defended himself against Polton's accusations BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, ii, 25–6, "me mones, ut cautior sim in scribendo nova. Mi Simon, nescio quid alii scripserint, ego nil scripsi domino Wintoniensi detractorium, ni falsum neque aliquid quod, si publicetur debeam vel paulum erubescere . . . Illud quod scripsi volui esse notum domino Wintoniensi propter utilitatem ecclesie, non populo; quod si ipse publicavit, que culpa est Poggii? . . . Nam de Cicestrensi [Polton] quod me arguis pro iis que scripsi, amice tu quidem facis, sed paufulum erras. Ille non solum me appellavit spurcissimis verbis sed scribi quoque alterius nomine fecit domino Wintoniensi falso mentiens. Cum esset inter nos verborum contentio satis honesta in secreta camera pape, ille expuens verba ampullosa et in iram prosiliens coram pluribus dixit me vilem asinum ribaldum; sed non tulit impune . . . scripsi Wintoniensi rei enarrationem veram. Nil finxi, nil addidi." Polton, a Beaufort client, had previously held a virtual monopoly on the flow of information from Rome to England, HARVEY, pp. 11–12. Clearly, he resented Poggio's poaching in a territory he had considered as his private preserve. Apparently, however, Polton's protests remained fruitless, for already by early 1425 he seems to have been recalled to England. The fact that his position remained vacant for four years suggests that in the meantime Poggio proved a reliable and effective defender of English (of Beaufort's?) interests at the Curia.

⁶¹ For Poggio's correspondence with Beaufort, Petworth and Bildestone compare *Lettere*, ii, iii ad indices. For his ties with the Castiglione see above, Part Two, chapter thirteen, p. 148.

in loco celeberrimo orbis, fruor libertate maxima, lucror quantum satis est ad modestam vitam parvo cum labore, non curo quis ascendat aut descendat, nulla ambitione laboro. Convenit mecum status meus. Quid ad hanc vitam addi potest?⁶²

In fact, Poggio could still think of additions to this way of life: even before 1427, he had bought an expensive villa in his native Terranova which came to house his growing library and a collection of ancient statues. In 1435 now aged fifty-three, the humanist married a pretty eighteen-year-old girl from the Florentine aristocracy.⁶³ The acquisition of these status symbols marked the secretary's slow but inexorable rise into the ranks of the five hundred wealthiest citizens of Florence.⁶⁴ The esteem he enjoyed in that city found its ultimate expression in Poggio's appointment to the Florentine chancellorship in 1453.⁶⁵

This did not mean that Poggio had traded in his humanist aspirations—on the contrary: his curial office empowered him to pursue his literary interests all the more effectively. Placed at the centre of information from all over Europe, the humanist could draw on a wealth of narrative material, and his flexible working hours allowed him to utilise this rich repository of gossip, funny stories and dramatic incidents in writings like his *Facetiae* or *De varietate fortunae*. Besides, his position gave Poggio access to the international infrastructure of the papal administration; this in turn enabled him, in collaboration with Niccoli, to coordinate and promote the systematic recovery of classical texts from monastic libraries even in remote parts of Europe.⁶⁶ In the final analysis, it may have been his office as papal secretary that provided the basis for Poggio's ascent into the élite of first generation Quattrocento humanists.

Clearly, Poggio's four-and-a-half-years' stay in England was not, as has hitherto been postulated, an inconsequential episode in his biography, but a turning point in the humanist's career which laid

⁶² BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, i, 113 (6 December 1427).

⁶³ On his villa and collections, WALSER, pp. 104–10; p. 140, pp. 146–8. On his marriage with Vaggia di Buondelmonte, see MARTINES, pp. 210–14.

⁶⁴ For Poggio's economic ascent *ibid.*, pp. 123–7; WALSER, pp. 338–427; *Contratti di compra di beni di Poggio Bracciolini*, ed. R. RISTORI (Florence, 1983).

⁶⁵ The Florentines soon regretted their choice, for the septuagenarian chancellor seems to have considered his office in Florence as a belated indemnity for the sinecure that had eluded him some thirty-five years earlier, WALSER, pp. 285–6; RUBINSTEIN, 'Poggio', pp. 218–21.

⁶⁶ SABBADINI, *Le scoperte*, i, 101–13.

the foundation for his later success as a professional humanist. Yet Poggio's success-story also has a wider significance: alongside Pier Paolo Vergerio, Poggio was one of the first humanists to have sought employment outside Italy. His appointment to the prestigious papal secretaryship as a result of his work-experience in Beaufort's household may have had a signal function for subsequent generations of humanists to consider foreign service not as a forced exile but as an opportunity to gain a valuable additional qualification that could decide their future career in Italy. Three factors had contributed to Poggio's success: first, his courage to forsake the relative safety of a post in the middling ranks of curial administration for the imponderables of foreign service. Second, Poggio's perseverance, his astuteness in manipulating his patrons and middlemen in Rome and England, and his acute sense of timing. Yet pluck and tenacity alone would probably not have sufficed to ensure Poggio's success. Ultimately, it seems to have been the fact that he was a former *familiaris* of Henry Beaufort, who dominated English politics after 1422 and commanded powerful connections at the Curia, which recommended Poggio for the English desk in the papal secretariat and paved the way for his triumphant return to the Curia. What lessons did Tito Livio Frulovisi and Antonio Beccaria draw from Poggio's experience when they entered the service of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester in the late 1430s?

The Ferrarese humanist Tito Livio Frulovisi (1400–after 1456) had worked as a teacher and playwright in Venice before he joined Gloucester's household during the second half of 1436. In the following two years, Frulovisi officiated as the duke's "poeta et orator", tending to Gloucester's Latin correspondence and composing original works at the duke's request. Late in 1438, however, the humanist left Gloucester's service for unknown reasons. After attempts to find another position in England had failed, he returned to Italy where he found employment in the ducal chancery of Milan in 1440. Two years later, he abandoned that position to spend the rest of his professional life as a practising physician.

Frulovisi has left no epistolary; his biography must, therefore, be pieced together from autobiographical notes in his surviving works and scarce archival material. Based on this fragmentary evidence, previous studies have proposed that too incompetent and too unsteady to hold any position for a longer period of time, Frulovisi was for-

ever destined to remain a marginal figure in the humanist community. The present investigation cannot offer new evidence for the reconstruction of Frulovisi's professional career; instead, it proposes a reinterpretation of the known facts. Building on the findings of the previous chapters, the inquiry focuses on factors other than Frulovisi's literary attainment which may have influenced his career. It does not consider the humanist as a casualty of the competition in Italy, but as a man who made conscious choices concerning his professional future. Such a change of perspective draws attention to aspects of Frulovisi's career which have previously escaped attention; it offers an alternative to the established portrait of Frulovisi as an incompetent *littérateur* and impetuous troublemaker, and makes it possible to present him as a humanist professional who took pragmatic decisions to realise his idea of the Good Life.

Frulovisi was a typical representative of the second generation of Quattrocento humanists. Born around 1400, he attended the school of Guarino da Verona before training as a notary.⁶⁷ Bored by the routine of notarial work, he embarked in the late 1420s on a career as a playwright of comedies that were inspired by Greek and Roman models.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, he earned his living as a successful schoolmaster in Venice. Yet Frulovisi seems to have harboured higher ambitions. In 1433/4, now in his early thirties, he abandoned teaching and composed the political treatise *De Republica*, a praise of just and representative princely rule.⁶⁹ His hope thereby to recommend himself for an office at the court of Leonello d'Este was, however, disappointed and in summer 1434 Frulovisi was forced to resume his work as a teacher.

Until then, Frulovisi's career had been in no way different from that of other young humanists who were seeking to establish themselves professionally during this period. Yet he seems to have borne his situation with less patience than his peers. Returning to his lacklustre existence as a schoolmaster, Frulovisi apparently experienced

⁶⁷ Unless otherwise marked, the following biographical sketch is based on Previt -Orton's introduction to FRULOVISI, *Opera*, ix-xxxii; SABBADINI, 'Tito Livio Frulovisio'; KING, pp. 377-8, and ARBIZZONI, G., 'Frulovisi, Tito Livio de', *DBI*, 1 (1998), 646-50.

⁶⁸ FRULOVISI, *Opera*, p. 369, "possem adhaerere notariae, missisque litteris vitam tutari et ad extremos annos honeste producere; sed vincit virtutis [i.e. litteris] amor."

⁶⁹ The treatise is printed *ibid.* pp. 289-389. The most recent discussion is in NEGRI ROSIO, A.M., 'Contributi per lo studio del *De Republica* di Tito Livio Frulovisi', *Contributi* (Biblioteca municipale A. Panizzi, Reggio Emilia), i, 2 (1977), pp. 129-58.

the same frustration which Poggio had felt some twenty years earlier when he had been relegated to the office as *scriptor* and *abbreviator*. Poggio's decision to forsake the security of his subordinate position in the papal chancery had been facilitated by the fact that he had been offered an attractive position in the household of Henry Beaufort; no such offer seems to have awaited Frulovisi upon his return to Venice in 1434 and it may have been his fear that with no immediate alternative, he would all too easily slip back into his teaching routine that compelled Frulovisi, in the subsequent months, to produce two plays whose venomous *ad personam* attacks on prominent representatives of Venetian public life were calculated to scandalise his audience. If the publication of the *Symmachus* and the *Oratoria* was indeed motivated by the desire to burn his bridges, Frulovisi attained his objective to the full: by the late summer of 1435, his position in the *serenissima* had become so untenable that the humanist was left with no other choice than to turn his back on the city.

His movements in the following twelve months cannot be reconstructed. Apparently, however, Frulovisi had determined to gain additional professional qualifications; he either went to Rhodes and Crete for a few months to brush up his Greek, or else he immediately decided to emulate the model of Poggio and to leave for northern Europe to gather work-experience there. Sometime during the latter half of 1436, at any rate, Frulovisi entered the service of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester in England. Possibly, the humanist owed his appointment to Piero da Monte, whom he seems to have known from their joint studies with Guarino.⁷⁰ The presentation of a copy of his *De Republica* may have further recommended Frulovisi for the position as Gloucester's humanist in residence.⁷¹ Frulovisi's duties in the duke's household seem to have been more comprehensive and more straightforwardly 'humanist' than those of Poggio in Beaufort's service some twenty years earlier. The *Vita Henrici Quinti* and the *Humfroidos* which Frulovisi composed at the duke's request have already been mentioned.⁷² The humanist also tended to the duke's Latin correspondence and he may have written two comedies during his stay in England.⁷³ Presumably, Frulovisi was initially retained

⁷⁰ Above, Part Two, chapter fourteen, p. 183n.

⁷¹ A copy of *De Republica* was included in Gloucester's donation to Oxford of 1444, SAMMUT, p. 81.

⁷² Above, Part One, chapter six.

⁷³ For his secretarial duties compare WEISS, p. 42; SABBADINI, 'Frulovisi', p. 59.

by Gloucester in the same way in which Poggio had been kept in Beaufort's household twenty years earlier. By contrast to Beaufort, Gloucester seems also to have been prepared to grant his lay clerk access to secular patronage in England, for in March 1437 the duke petitioned for Frulovisi's denization.⁷⁴

None the less, the humanist left Gloucester's service after barely two years. The reasons for his departure cannot be ascertained. Hitherto it has been assumed that Gloucester dismissed him because he had objected to the humanist's bad temper, his lack of Greek and, above all, his ineptitude as a versifier that had become manifest in the *Humfroidos*.⁷⁵ While this interpretation is bound to convince any modern scholar who has ever laboured over the *Humfroidos*, its value for the understanding of the causes of Frulovisi's departure from the duke's service is debatable; for if it is accepted that the *Humfroidos* was conceived as a companion-piece to the *Vita Henrici Quinti*, and if it is furthermore assumed that the *Vita* was written late in 1436, the *Humfroidos* must have been completed some time during the first half of 1437.⁷⁶ This, in turn, would mean that Gloucester had let more than eighteen months pass before he vented his anger at Frulovisi's misbegotten panegyric. Since such a belated reaction appears implausible, it is here proposed that Frulovisi abandoned Gloucester's service at his own initiative because he had come to realise that his association with the duke was unlikely to add distinction to his *curriculum vitae*.

When Frulovisi had joined his service in 1436, Gloucester had been at the height of his popularity in England. As the sole surviving brother of the heroic Henry V, the duke was the heir apparent to the throne of England and France. Moreover, in the immediate aftermath of his triumphal raid on Flanders, he enjoyed the favour

Frulovisi's *Peregrinatio* and the *Eugenius*, printed in FRULOVISI, *Opera*, pp. 185–286, are not discussed here, because they have only a superficial bearing on the English context; the speculations by PRÉVITÉ-ORTON, xxviii–xxix and SCHIRMER, p. 42 that these plays contain allusions to Gloucester are not supported by the evidence, nor can it be proved that they were performed in the duke's household, see RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', p. 123n.

⁷⁴ RYMER, x, 661–2. Compare also STOREY, 'Gentleman-bureaucrats', pp. 104–7 for the sort of material benefits lay clerks in the environment of Henry VI's court could accrue from their services.

⁷⁵ SABBADINI, 'Frulovisi', p. 60; PRÉVITÉ-ORTON, xiv; WEISS, *Humanism*, p. 43.

⁷⁶ For the interrelations between the *Vita* and the *Humfroidos* see, above Part One, chapter six, pp. 73–7.

of Henry VI, and with access to the crown patronage Gloucester may have promised Frulovisi generous rewards for his literary exertions. In 1436 the humanist may, therefore, have believed that in the duke he had found a powerful and well connected patron such as Poggio had encountered in Beaufort some twenty years earlier. Yet Gloucester's ascendance was short-lived; by autumn 1437 he no longer commanded influence on English politics nor did he have access to crown patronage.⁷⁷ Moreover, it cannot have escaped Frulovisi's attention that apart from his friendship with da Monte and his bond with Decembrio, Gloucester had few contacts in Italy on which the humanist could have relied after his eventual return to the peninsula. Solicitude for his professional future may, therefore, have encouraged Frulovisi to abandon his position with Gloucester and, after two years in the duke's service, to seek a rapprochement with the man who had been behind Poggio's professional success: Henry Beaufort.

Late in 1438 Frulovisi addressed an encomium combined with a petition for a post in the English royal chancery to Archbishop John Stafford, one of Beaufort's closest allies in the royal council.⁷⁸ Yet, apparently a less masterful manipulator than Poggio, Frulovisi seems to have insufficiently prepared the ground for his change of sides: his advances on Stafford met with little success, and in spring 1439 the humanist was forced to leave England empty-handed. Initial attempts to effectuate his return to England came to nothing. Still, during his time in Gloucester's service, the humanist seems to have established first contacts with Pier Candido Decembrio, and it may have been through the friendly offices of the Milanese secretary that Frulovisi, in spring 1440, managed to secure a post in the ducal chancery of Milan.⁷⁹

This appointment might have been his entrance ticket to the higher dignities of a court humanist on the model of Poggio's rise at the Curia. Yet unlike Poggio, Frulovisi seems to have been unable to arrange himself with the dependencies that circumscribed his existence at court. In 1442 he quit his position in Milan. Justifying his move to Pier Candido Decembrio he wrote: "Ego a vobis abiens, ut verum non inficiar, ex principibus nauseans adeo stomachatus

⁷⁷ Above, Part One, chapter seven, pp. 81–2.

⁷⁸ FRULOVISI, T.L., 'Encomium Iohannis Stafford', printed in FRULOVISI, *Opera*, pp. 390–92.

⁷⁹ SABBADINI, p. 60; WEISS, p. 49; PRÉVITÉ-ORTON, p. xv; ARBIZZONI, pp. 649–50.

sum, ut ipsorum ieiunium aliquantisper sit habendum cum popularibus vivendi".⁸⁰ Now in his early forties, Frulovisi once more gave his life an entirely new direction: he forsook his literary ambitions and enrolled at the faculty of medicine at Toulouse. Thereafter, it is difficult to reconstruct his biography; the scarce evidence suggests, however, that after he had successfully completed his medical studies, Frulovisi returned to Venice and settled down as a physician.⁸¹

Three observations can be gleaned from this re-interpretation of Frulovisi's biography: first, it is conceivable that the humanist had not been pushed out of the Italian market but that in response to the typical problems young humanists of his generation encountered at the beginning of their professional careers, Frulovisi may have actively sought employment outside Italy because he hoped thereby to gain foreign work experience and thus to increase his chances in the Italian market. Second, it appears possible that Frulovisi was not dismissed by Gloucester, but that, having initially been deceived by the duke's short-lived political ascendancy of 1436/7, the humanist abandoned the position with Gloucester on his own accord, when he realised that his association with the politically isolated duke was unlikely to benefit his career in the same way in which Poggio twenty years before him had profited from his connection with Henry Beaufort. Frulovisi's belated advances on members of the Beaufort connection after his break with Gloucester may have miscarried because, less adroit an operator than Poggio, the humanist had failed to establish contacts with Gloucester's political rival before effecting his change of sides. Thirdly, Frulovisi's failure to become a prominent humanist after his return to Italy was not necessarily the result of his putative shortcomings as a writer, but may have reflected his personal decision against the life of a court humanist. Clearly, Frulovisi's career was influenced by a number of factors other than literary attainment; most important, however, it seems to have been shaped by the humanist's personal choices and by his uncompromising determination to take charge of his life, even if this meant, ultimately, forsaking his humanist vocation. In this Frulovisi differed markedly from his successor in Gloucester's service, Antonio Beccaria (1400–1474).

⁸⁰ DECEMBRIO, 'Epistolary', fol. 83, printed by SABBADINI, 'Frulovisi', p. 80.

⁸¹ KING, p. 378; ARBIZZONI, p. 650.

How the contact between the duke and Beccaria was established and why the humanist decided to accept Gloucester's offer is unclear.⁸² At the latest in autumn 1439, however, Beccaria arrived in England and he remained in Gloucester's household until 1445. Apart from the composition of political orations such as his addresses to the English ambassadors and convocation of 1444/5, Beccaria was, like Frulovisi before him, charged with Gloucester's Latin correspondence. At the duke's request, he executed, moreover, Latin translations of Greek and Italian texts.⁸³

Beccaria's prolonged good working relations with Gloucester are usually attributed to the humanist's adroitness in pandering to the literary tastes of his English master.⁸⁴ Against this interpretation, it is here proposed that above all, it may have been Beccaria's status as an ordained priest which consolidated his relations with Gloucester. Born around 1400, Beccaria had attended the school of Vittorino da Feltre. Less principled or more pious than Poggio or Frulovisi, the humanist had entered the priesthood as a young man.⁸⁵ Safe in the knowledge that he could always fall back on the church, Beccaria was thus spared many of the anxieties that shaped the experience of his secular peers in the humanist community. This, and his good connections with the Castiglione network may explain why the Veronese humanist was apparently less concerned at Gloucester's precarious situation in English politics than his predecessor and remained with the duke even after the Cobham scandal of 1441.⁸⁶ For Gloucester, on the other hand, Beccaria's clerical status meant that he could invest his humanist in residence with an ecclesiastical benefice and thus enjoy his services at no cost to himself. The fact

⁸² For da Monte's possible role in these negotiations see above, Part Two, chapter fourteen, p. 183n.

⁸³ For his orations see above, Part one, chapter nine, p. 118. On his other assignments MARCHI, G.P., 'L'umanista Antonio Beccaria alla corte di Humphrey di Gloucester e di Ermolao Barbaro', *Annali della Facoltà di Lingue in Verona dell'Università di Padova*, 2nd ser., i (1966-7), 1-41, at pp. 5-6; WEISS, *Humanism*, pp. 45-6; SAMMUT, pp. 21-2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, VICKERS, pp. 377-9; WEISS, *Humanism*, p. 46.

⁸⁵ VASOLI, 'Beccaria', p. 447.

⁸⁶ For his connections with the Castiglione see TALENTI, 'Epistolary', ff. 48r-49r (Talenti to Beccaria, 1443?), printed by FOFFANO, 'Umanisti italiani', pp. 32-4, "reverendus in Christo pater, dominus meus Baiocensis episcopus, pluries ad me scripsit mirum in modum commendans virtutem et eloquenciam tuam... iussitque ut te diligam et observem studeamque litteris meis familiaritatem tuam inire quam michi confidentissime pollicitus est, tanta est apud eum opinio lenitatis et humanitatis tue."

that Beccaria stayed in England for more than six years suggests, in any case, that the humanist was satisfied with the working conditions and the terms of remuneration he was offered by Gloucester.⁸⁷

The good understanding between the duke and his “poeta et orator” seems to have come to an abrupt end in the summer of 1445. The last testimony to Beccaria’s presence in England is the covering letter which he composed on 12 July 1445 in Gloucester’s name to accompany the duke’s present to Alfonso of Aragon.⁸⁸ Gloucester’s spectacular fall from grace three days later must have driven it home to Beccaria that his master’s career had come to its definitive end.⁸⁹ The humanist would have been in England for long enough to know that it would be only a matter of time until the dominant powers would move against Gloucester. An account that Beccaria himself only just managed to escape Suffolk’s myrmidons before he left England is contradicted by the evidence; yet it is indicative of the fears Beccaria may have experienced when the future of his sheltered existence in England was called into question by Gloucester’s sudden eclipse.⁹⁰

Anxious to save his skin, Beccaria took flight. Within weeks after Gloucester’s fall, the humanist seems to have returned to his native Verona, where his contacts in the church, possibly combined with family connections, soon secured him a lucrative position in the episcopal court of Ermolao Barbaro.⁹¹ From Verona, at a safe distance from the political maelstrom which was about to engulf his former master, Beccaria continued to send Gloucester translations of patristic treatises.⁹² Whether this was out of genuine affection or out of the diffuse wish to placate the justified anger of a master whose fealties he had betrayed, is impossible to ascertain. Whatever Beccaria’s

⁸⁷ Compare, however, an epigram which he addressed to Gloucester and in which he complained about the duke’s avarice, printed by SAMMUT, p. 165.

⁸⁸ Discussed above, Part One, chapter ten, pp. 123–5. For Beccaria’s authorship of the letter see WEISS, ‘Beccaria’, p. 346.

⁸⁹ Above, Part One, chapter ten, pp. 125–7.

⁹⁰ PRENDILACQUA, F., *De vita Victorini Feltrensis dialogus* (Padua, 1774), p. 67, cf. RONCONI, G., ‘Il Grammatico Antonio Beccaria Difensore della Poesia e la sua *Oratio in Terentium*’, in *Medioevo e Rinascimento Veneto. Con altri Studi in Onore di Lino Lazzarini*, Medioevo e Umanesimo xxxiv (2 vols., Padua, 1979), i, 397–426, p. 398n, “Mortuoque Antonii domino, quum amici ferro peterentur, hic noster barbarorum manus effugere vix nudus potuit.” *De facto*, Beccaria was already safely back in Italy by the time Gloucester died.

⁹¹ VASOLI, ‘Beccaria’, p. 448; MARCHI, pp. 9–13.

⁹² WEISS, ‘Beccaria’, p. 346n.

motives, Gloucester died in 1447 and thereafter, the humanist could devote himself entirely to the increase of his wealth and the cultivation of his literary interests in Italy. At his death in 1474 Beccaria was the owner of several houses in Verona and the possessor of an extensive humanist library.⁹³

Although his contemporaries esteemed his abilities as a translator and poet, Beccaria failed to gain profile as a professional humanist.⁹⁴ This may have been due to the fact that having embraced the traditional career of the clerical *litteratus*, Beccaria had never been forced to define his identity as a professional humanist. Indeed his biography marked a counterpoint to those of his lay peers, who had chosen to create for themselves an independent existence as *hommes de lettres* outside the church. As inventors of the humanist profession, lay clerks like Poggio, Frulovisi, and Castiglionchio had perforce become bold and at times artful tightrope-walkers; the beneficed cleric Beccaria, on the other hand, remained, for all his literary accomplishments, ultimately an amateur working with a safety net.

This chapter has not been able to offer more than mere sketches of the biographies of Poggio Bracciolini, Tito Livio Frulovisi and Antonio Beccaria. Further studies will have to show to what extent Poggio, Frulovisi and Beccaria were representative of humanists who left Italy during the first half of the Quattrocento. The *curriculum vitae* of Ænea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–1465), who left Italy in 1442, to work in the service of the Emperor, and who, at the age of forty, decided to give his life a new direction by opting for a career in the church that reached its apotheosis in his elevation as pope Pius II, suggests, however, that the lives of Poggio, Frulovisi and Beccaria contained elements that were typical of humanist experience during this period, and that—in combination—these elements could open the way to the highest dignities in Europe.

⁹³ His testament and the inventory of his library are printed by MARCHI, pp. 20–40.

⁹⁴ For Beccaria's scholarly reputation see *ibid.*, pp. 10–11; VASOLI, p. 448.

CHAPTER TWENTY

SUMMARY

The above investigation has not been able to produce conclusive answers to the question of the motives that encouraged Italian humanists, during the second quarter of the Quattrocento, to seek patronage and employment in England; yet it has drawn attention to the multiplicity of factors other than literary attainment that may have determined their northward orientation. The opening chapter has stressed the influence of generational patterns, age groups and changing structures in the Italian job-market on the development of humanist careers. The examination of the considerations that led Pier Candido Decembrio to seek the patronage of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester has highlighted the importance of foreign patronage in the making of humanist reputations. The discussion of Decembrio's failure to reach a satisfying arrangement with Gloucester concerning the remuneration of his services as a literary agent has shown how different conventions of literary patronage could inhibit the process of cultural transmission from Italy to the north. The analysis of the incentives for Lapo da Castiglionchio and Antonio Pacini to send their works to Gloucester via Zanone da Castiglione has put into relief the complexity of patron/broker/client networks, and further accentuated the central importance of middlemen in the transmission process.

Counter to the established notion that Italian *umanisti* experienced their sojourns in England as periods of involuntary exile that could in no way profit their subsequent careers, the revision of Poggio Bracciolini's professional biography has demonstrated that humanists may have opted for foreign service because, first, it offered them more attractive working conditions than they could have expected in Italy, and secondly, it held the promise of ultimate financial independence. The examination of Poggio's career subsequent to his stay in England suggested, moreover, that—provided it was gathered in the right places—foreign work experience could endow humanists with an additional qualification that enhanced their chances in the Italian market.

The role of personal decision and individual agency in the formation of humanist careers has been underscored by the biographical sketch of Tito Livio Frulovisi. The re-examination of the reasons that may have led to the termination of Frulovisi's service for Gloucester has, moreover, drawn attention to the way in which the changing political fortunes of a patron could affect his attraction for his humanist clients. This motif has been continued in the brief discussion of Antonio Beccaria's English sojourn. Most of all, however, Beccaria's biography has accented the continuing importance of the traditional model of the clerical *litteratus* as an alternative to that of the lay humanist professional.

Each of these aspects calls for further investigation, and it is at this point impossible to assess how far the biographies that have been featured here are representative of the experience of other humanists who sought work or employment outside Italy during the period under scrutiny. One central theme has, however, evolved from the present case studies: the humanists considered their professional activity not as separate from their literary aspirations but as an integral part of their biography. Rather than passively to adapt to adverse circumstances, the *umanisti* tried actively to take charge of their professional lives and exhibited considerable sophistication and pragmatism in advancing their interests. In most cases, the humanists apparently did not perceive their professional ambition as an end in itself but as a means eventually to realise their dream of a life of lay literary independence. To seek patronage or employment in England seems to have been only one of many possible strategies to further this dream. That most of these humanists remained largely ignorant of English culture and politics, and that they showed little interest in their host country, is not necessarily an indication of English backwardness during the first half of the fifteenth century but a reflection of the fact that, ultimately, the ambitions of even the most enterprising humanists remained firmly fixed on Italy.¹

¹ This also implicit in RUNDLE, 'Republics and Tyrants', pp. 50–64.

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the transmission of Italian Renaissance humanism to England through the network of patronage that linked Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, his middlemen Zanone da Castiglione and Piero da Monte, and several members of the humanist community in Italy.

The integrative reinterpretation of Gloucester's biography as a politician and literary patron in the first part has demonstrated that the duke's literary patronage was closely interrelated with his political action. It has here been proposed that from 1422 to the early 1440s this action was dominated by Gloucester's commitment to the legacy of his brother Henry V and by the duke's ambition to protect the interests of his nephew Henry VI against the putative dynastic ambitions of the Beaufort family. Throughout his career, to define and formulate his policy, Gloucester had recourse to historical models that were mostly culled from ancient literature. It has here been argued that this pragmatic approach to literature, and the belief in the immediate interrelation between theory and action formed the leitmotif of the duke's biography as a statesman and literary patron.

The examination of the roles of Zanone da Castiglione and Piero da Monte as mediators between Gloucester and the humanist community in Italy in the second part of this investigation has shown that, whereas Zanone's literary brokerage on Gloucester's behalf in 1437 constituted only a brief and ultimately inconsequential episode in the history of Castiglione expansion into Normandy, Piero da Monte's activity as the duke's middleman represented a central element in the vain endeavours of the papal collector to realise his ambition of elevation to the college of cardinals. The difference in status of the powerful 'broker-patron' Zanone da Castiglione and the politically isolated 'broker-client' da Monte had immediate influence on the nature of their literary agency. Zanone's involvement remained superficial, as the bishop merely sent Gloucester already written humanist publications from Italy combined with covering letters that pandered to the duke's self-image as triumphant military leader, protector of the Lancastrian legacy and *tutor* of Henry VI. Da Monte, on the other hand, when he took their arguments and presented

them under his own name, actively endeavoured to adapt humanist texts to what he perceived to be Gloucester's specific requirements. Despite these differences, however, both Zanone and da Monte clearly perceived their literary brokerage as an integral part of their action as papal diplomats and middlemen between the English government and the Curia.

Finally, the preliminary investigation of the motives that encouraged Italian humanists between 1420 and 1450 to seek patronage or employment in England, in the third part, has suggested that these men were not, as has previously been maintained, third-rate representatives of their profession. Instead it has here been argued that, belonging to the second generation of Quattrocento humanists, the men who sought to establish contacts with Gloucester or his middlemen in the course of the 1430s were only at the beginning of their careers when they first sought a rapprochement with the duke or his agents. They had thus yet to establish their independent reputation as professional humanists. Confronted with heightened competition in the Italian job-market in the course of the 1430s, these young *umanisti* apparently perceived their contacts with Gloucester or his middlemen as a means to improve their scholarly reputation within the humanist community, as a way indirectly to recommend themselves for employment in Italy, or, alternatively, as an opportunity to gain work experience abroad and thus, ultimately, to enhance their chances of appointment to a leading position in Italy. The humanists exhibited considerable pragmatism and determination in the promotion of their professional careers and thus in providing a basis for the realisation of their dream of literary independence.

It is the central contention of this book that it was the interlocking of these particular interests of Gloucester, his middlemen, and the Italian humanists that set into motion the process of the transmission of Italian Renaissance humanism to England in the period between 1420 and 1450.

The results of this study open the field for further investigation. The integrative interpretation of Gloucester's biography as politician and literary patron might serve as a blueprint for similar examinations of the careers of prominent literary patrons and men of politics in Italy, in England and the rest of Europe—examinations that would no longer consider the literary patronage of rulers like Henry VIII, Federico da Montefeltro or Mathias Corvinus as separate from or subordinate to their political action, but as an integral part of

their policy. The study of the middlemen Zanone da Castiglione and Piero da Monte has highlighted the importance of such mediators in the process of cultural transmission and raises substantial questions about the influence of the status of a middleman as a 'broker-client' or a 'broker-patron' on the nature of his agency. Finally, the provisional examination of the professional careers of the humanists who sought patronage and employment in England during the period under scrutiny has underscored the need for further systematic investigations of all aspects of the professional world of the Italian humanists.

Since the arguments put forward in this study are apt to assume considerable centrifugal force, it is important at the end of the investigation to point to shared perceptions and to structures that formed the common point of departure, that permitted and facilitated the process of the transmission of humanism to England. The results of the present investigation have shown that Gloucester, his middlemen and the Italian humanists who sought the patronage of the duke or his agents all shared a conception of literature as an integral component of their public and professional lives—a component that informed their action. Previous studies have tended to identify this pragmatic approach to literature merely as an aspect of the humanist quest for the *vita activa*. However, the example of Gloucester's early recourse to historical precedent for the formulation of his policy in the 1420s, at a time, when the duke was apparently not yet connected with the humanists in Italy, shows that similar pragmatic approaches to literature and learning were to be found in northern Europe, and may have favoured the cisalpine reception of humanism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Yet this investigation has also brought to light another important factor which may have had central importance for the spread of humanism in Europe at the end of the middle ages: the all-pervasive influence of patronage. Whether it was the power-struggle at the head of the English government, the diplomatic machinations of Zanone da Castiglione and Piero da Monte, or the efforts of the Italian humanists to establish themselves in Italy, action was in some form or other always circumscribed by patronage, thus confirming Werner Gundersheimer's thesis that patronage constituted "one of the dominant social processes of pre-industrial Europe."²

² GUNDERSHEIMER, W.L., 'Patronage in the Renaissance: An Exploratory Approach', in LYTTLE, G.F./ORGEL, S. (eds.), *Patronage in the Renaissance*, pp. 3–23, at p. 3.

Literary historians of early imperial Rome and of classical Greece have, in the past ten years, increasingly drawn attention to the importance of patronage, as the dominant form of social and political organisation in ancient Rome and in the Greek *polis*, for the formation of the literary discourse of these respective societies. Meanwhile, Renaissance scholars have begun to emphasise the parallels between the social formation of Greek and Roman society and the city states of Tre- and Quattrocento Italy.³

With reference to these new approaches, and in view of the results of the present inquiry, it is, therefore, here proposed that the triumphal advance of Italian Renaissance humanism in fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe may have been due to the fact that the recovery of the literature of ancient Greece and Rome provided European society with a sophisticated discourse that gave ideal expression to the intermediate structures which were evolving at the end of the 'feudal' and the beginning of the early modern period. Italian Renaissance humanism may have become one of the central paradigms of western culture because it provided a linguistic representation of the patterns of patronage that dominated a large part of that culture's social and political organisation.

³ Compare e.g. WHITE, P., 'Amicitia and the Profession of Poetry in Early Imperial Rome', *JRS* LXVIII (1978), 74–92; GOLD, B.K. (ed.), *Literary and Artistic Patronage in Ancient Rome* (Austin, Texas, 1982); SALLER, R.P., *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge, 1982); MOLHO, A. (ed.), *City states in classical antiquity and mediæval Italy: Athens and Rome, Florence and Venice* (Stuttgart, 1991).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

OBSERVATIONS ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL PAPAL SECRETARIES IN THE PAPAL SECRETARIAT DURING THE PONTIFICATES OF MARTIN V AND EUGENIUS IV

During the pontificate of Martin V, the secretariat comprised five senior clerks who worked largely concurrently. Apart from Poggio and Loschi these were Cencio Rustici (active from 1417 to 1443), Michele da Pisis (active from 1419 to 1431) and Bartolomeo da Montepulciano (active from before 1421 to 1429). Da Pisis and Loschi retired from active service during the early 1430s, Poggio and Rustici, however, continued as *secretarii participantes* during the pontificate of Eugenius IV alongside the newcomers Andrea da Florentia (active from 1431 to 1452) and Flavio Biondo (active from 1432 to 1463). In the early 1440s, Rustici seems to have retired from active service to be replaced by Bartolomeo Roverella (active from 1442 to 1447).¹ The registers of Rustici, Montepulciano and da Pisis have perished; one register of Antonio Loschi (Paris, Archives Nationales, LL 4a) and the entirety of the registers of Poggio (Vatican City, A.S.V., RV 356, RV 359, RV 365; Vatican City, B.A.V., MS Chigi D VII 101), da Florentia (Vatican City, A.S.V., RV 360, RV 367, RV 370), Biondo (Vatican City, A.S.V. RV 366) and Roverella (Vatican City, RV 361, RV 368–9) have survived.² Although Fink already noted that the first part of RV 359 is a contemporary copy of Poggio's register, B.A.V. MS Chigi D VII 101, RV 359, has hitherto not been identified as a secretarial register, nor has it been ascribed to Poggio.³

¹ HOFMANN, ii, 107–12; OTTENTHAL, pp. 73–9.

² For detailed discussions of the registers in the Vatican Archives see OTTENTHAL, pp. 4–40, pp. 79–84; GIUSTI, M., *Studi sui Registri Vaticani*, Collectanea Archivi Vaticani, i (Vatican City, 1968), 39–42; FRENZ, pp. 376–387. For a discussion of the registers in the Vatican Library and in Paris see FINK, K.A., 'Die ältesten Breven und Brevenregister', *QFIAB*, xxv (1933/4), pp. 292–307; id., 'Poggio-Autographen kurialer Herkunft', in *Miscellanea Archivistica Angelo Mercati*, Studi e Testi, clxv (Vatican City, 1952), 129–33.

³ FINK, 'Älteste Breven' p. 306; compare e.g. the detailed description of this reg-

A.C. de la Mare confirms, however, that correction marks in the second part of RV 359 are by Poggio, and notes that both scribes who were employed in that register may have been connected with this secretary.⁴ On the basis of this evidence, it is, therefore, here proposed that RV 359 represents in its entirety a copy of one of Poggio's secretarial registers and that this copy was executed under Poggio's supervision, possibly in order to prepare a professional supplement to his private epistolary.⁵

The total number of entries for the registers in the Vatican Archives results from a count of all the entries in the secretarial registers Vatican City A.S.V., RV 356, 359–61, 365–70. The number of entries regarding England in these registers is derived from the records in the *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters*.⁶ To these are added the entries pertaining to England in Loschi's register, Paris, Archives Nationales, LL4 1, as listed in K.A. Fink's analysis of the political correspondence of Martin V.⁷

The data for diagram 4 is derived both from Fink and from Vatican City, A.S.V. RV 356 (secretarial register of Poggio, containing seventy-two dated and six undated entries for the period from 1423 to 1430). Fink listed the content of Poggio's second register for the pontificate of Martin V, Vatican City, B.A.V., MS Chigi D VII 101 and of Loschi's register, Paris, Archives Nationales, LL4 a; he dated every entry in these two registers and arranged them according to countries. This made it possible first, to chart the total number of entries for every year in these registers and second, year by year graphically to represent the number of entries relating to England. The diagram shows that in the year of his inception as papal secretary, Poggio's total output made up barely one quarter of the total turnover of Antonio Loschi; still his share in the English correspondence was only insignificantly smaller than that of Loschi and between

ister by FRENZ, T., 'Das Eindringen humanistischer Schriftformen in die Urkunden und Akten der päpstlichen Kurie im 15 Jahrhundert. Zweiter Teil', *AD*, xx (1974), 384–493, at pp. 473–5, provides a detailed paleographical analysis of this register, without, however, drawing the link with Poggio.

⁴ DE LA MARE, A.C., letter to the author of 17 January 1997.

⁵ Compare above, Part Three, chapter sixteen, p. 207n.

⁶ *CPL*, vii, passim.

⁷ FINK, 'Politische Korrespondenz', passim. Paris, Archives Nationales, MS LL4a has not been analysed by the editors of the *CPL*.

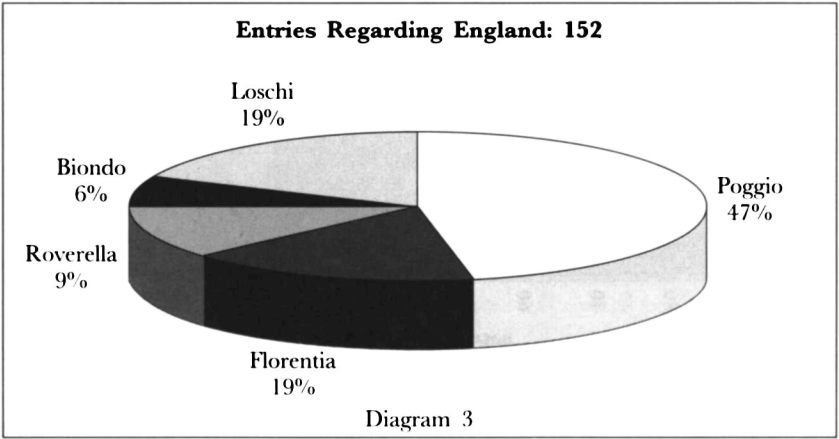
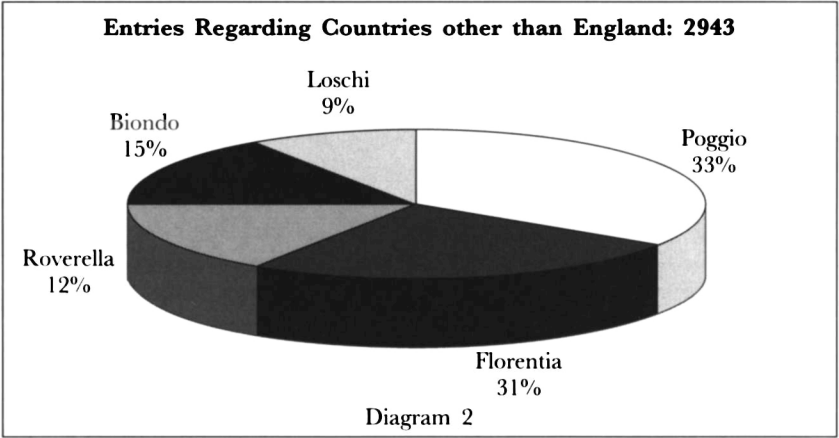
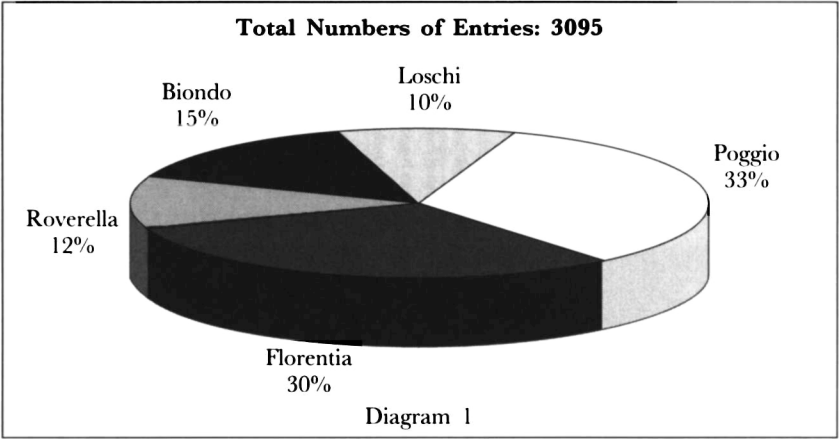
1424 and 1427 it was constantly bigger than that of Loschi. During the final years of Martin V's pontificate Poggio had to take on a large share of the workload of Loschi who was increasingly employed in diplomatic functions by the pope; moreover, after the death of Bartolomeo da Montepulciano, Poggio took over his assignments.⁸ This explains the sudden rise in Poggio's total output during these years; the parallel drop of his participation in the English correspondence, is inexplicable. If it is supposed, however, that even after his assumption to the secretariat, Poggio remained closely in touch with Beaufort (see above, p. 252), it could be speculated that there existed a connection between Beaufort's absence from England between spring 1427 and 1432 and the drop in Poggio's English correspondence.

In the absence of the registers of the other secretaries who worked under Martin V, it is impossible to ascertain in how far the data charted in diagram 4 is representative of the overall activity of the secretaries during this pontificate. It is, therefore, important to compare the results presented in diagram 4 with those for the pontificate of Eugenius IV. For this pontificate the data, is, as has been mentioned above, almost complete and hence more reliable. Unfortunately, the 2700 entries in the registers of Poggio (RV 359, RV 365), Andrea da Florentia (RV 360, 367, 370), Biondo (RV 366) and Roverella (RV 361, 368–9) are mostly undated. Since their dating on the basis of internal evidence would require several years if not decades of work, diagram 5 considers only the entries relating to England in these registers as recorded in the *Calendar of Papal Letters*, vii, passim and charts them year by year. The results of this survey seem to confirm the results of the analysis for the pontificate of Martin V, that is at least during the 1430s, Poggio constantly executed more of the papal correspondence concerning England than any of the three colleagues in the papal secretariat whose registers have survived. In the absence of comparative data it is hard to explain the peak of his English activity in 1435. Poggio's total output during that year may have been considerably higher than in other years; more importantly, however, the Congress of Arras heightened the intensity of Anglo-Papal relations in that year, indeed a significant

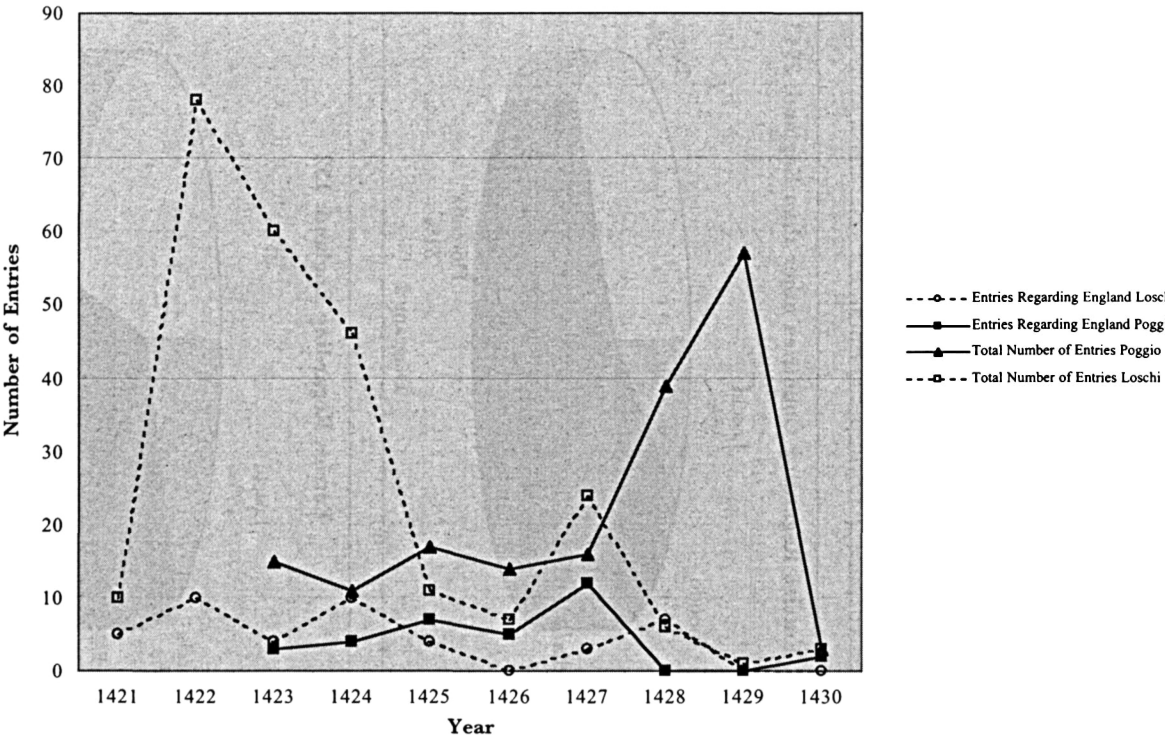
⁸ OTTENTHAL, p. 79n.

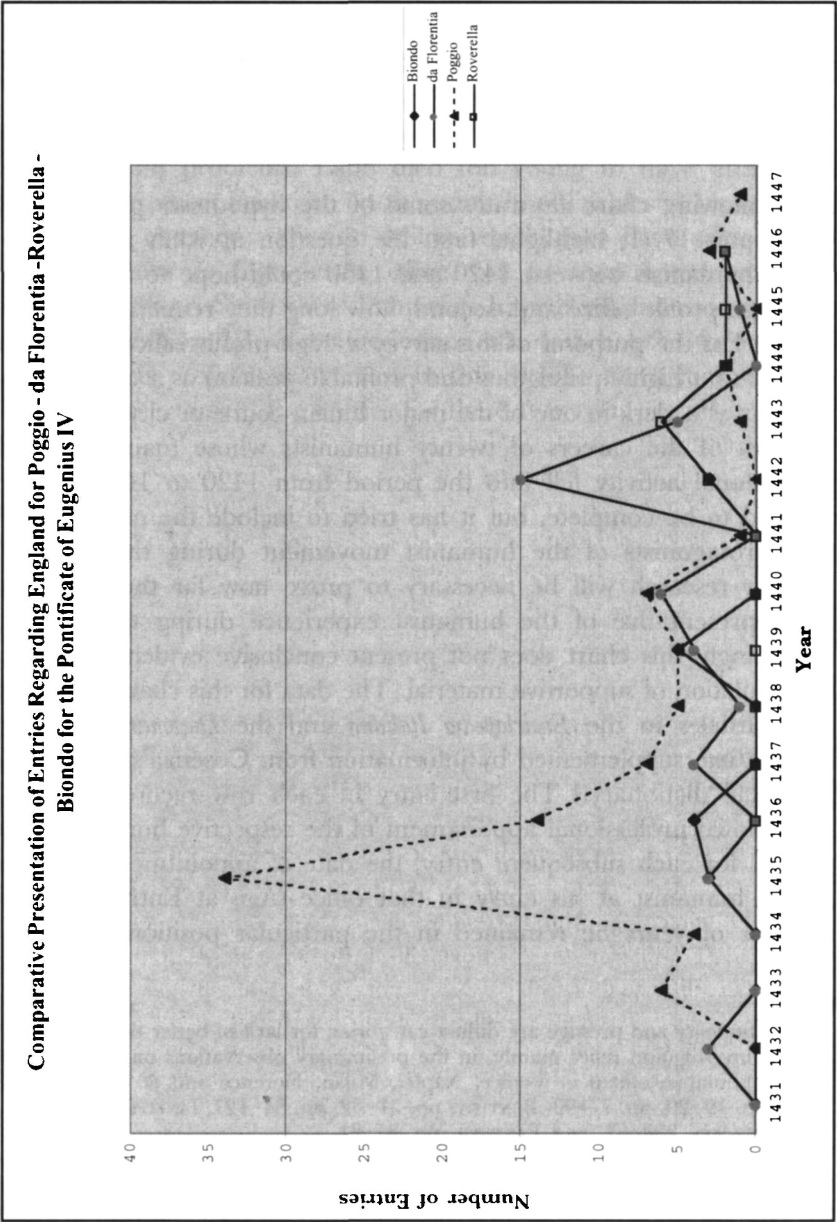
number of the entries from that year concerns the Congress of Arras.⁹ The drop in Poggio's English activity during the late 1430s is inexplicable; its further decrease during the early 1440s may have been due to Beaufort's eclipse in English politics during this period (on which see above, Part One, chapters seven to eight).

⁹ See *CPL*, vii, s.v. 'Vatican Regesta ccclix', 'Vatican Regesta ccclxv'.



Comparative Analysis Poggio-Loschi for the Pontificate of Martin V





APPENDIX II

THE PROFESSIONAL CAREERS OF ITALIAN HUMANISTS 1420 TO 1450

The following chart illustrates some of the hypotheses put forward in chapter 17. It highlights first, the question at what age professional humanists between 1420 and 1450 could hope to attain their first high-profile office and, second, how long they remained in these offices. For the purposes of this survey a 'high-profile office' has been defined as a highly prestigious and profitable position as a teacher/lecturer or as a clerk in one of the major Italian courts or city-republics.¹ The list of the careers of twenty humanists whose main phase of professional activity fell into the period from 1420 to 1450 cannot pretend to be complete, but it has tried to include the most important protagonists of the humanist movement during this period.² Further research will be necessary to prove how far these profiles are representative of the humanist experience during this period; accordingly this chart does not present conclusive evidence, but an accumulation of supportive material. The data for this chart is derived from articles in the *Enciclopedia Italiana* and the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, supplemented by information from Cosenza's bio-bibliographical dictionary.³ The first entry in each row records the earliest known professional appointment of the respective humanist. For this, as for each subsequent entry, the date of appointment, the age of the humanist at his entry in that office (Age at Entry) and the number of years he remained in the particular position (Years of

¹ Profitability and prestige are diffuse categories; for lack of better definitions, the present investigation relies mainly on the preliminary observations on the status of specific humanist offices in Venice, Naples, Milan, Florence and at the Curia by KING, pp. 19–20, pp. 77–90; BENTLEY, pp. 51–62, pp. 84–127, IANZITI, pp. 152–61; MARTINES, pp. 238–62, and PARTNER, pp. 47–81.

² For the definition of the 'professional humanist' see above, Part Three, chapter seventeen, p. 212n. Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (no. 17) has been included in this list since he only took holy orders after he had already attained prominence as a humanist.

³ *Enciclopedia Italiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arte* (35 vols. Milan, 1929–45); *DBI* and COSENZA.

Stay) are recorded. The first appointment to a high-profile office is charted in the central section in bold typeface. For the humanists of the first generation (i.e. humanists who were born between 1370 and 1380) the highest number of years they remained in one office is marked with an asterisk (*); for humanists who were born after 1380 this entry is marked with the number sign (#). The inclusion of Tito Livio Frulovisi and Lapo da Castiglionchio in this list has posed certain problems. Lapo died too young to have attained a high-profile office; Frulovisi, on the other hand, achieved his appointment to a chancery office in Milan which may have served as a stepping stone to high-profile office, but he then opted against a humanist career. Since these humanists have been discussed in some detail in section III, it seemed none the less helpful formally to include their professional careers in this list. To mark that they are included *hors concours*, the entries for these two men are set in italics.

	Date	AaE ^b	YoSc ^c	Position	Date	AaE ^b	YoSc ^c	First Appointment to High-Profile Office	Date	AaE	YoSc ^c	Position	Date	AaE ^b	YoSc ^c	Position
								chancellor in Milan	1398	30	6	administrative function in Vicenza	1404	36	3	papal secretary
								papal secretary	1405	35	10	free-lance publicist in Florence	1415	45	12	Florentine chancery
in ts, cine	1400	30	5	<i>curialis</i>	1405	35	9	secretary of Emperor Sigismand	1419	44	25	d. 1444				
	>1403	<29	?	studies Greek with Chrysoloras	1403	29	6	professor of Greek at Florentine <i>studio</i>	1410	36	4	schoolmaster and private tutor in Venice	1414	40	5	lecturer in Venice
	1414	38	5	<i>curialis</i>	1419	43	2	secretary of John Paleologus	1421	45	4	professor of Greek at Florentine <i>studio</i>	1425	49	2	tutor in Ferrara
a udies h	1418	40	1	lecturer in Padua	1421	43	1	schoolmaster and private tutor in Venice	1422	44	7	tutor of the Gonzaga children in Mantua	1429	51	17*	d. 1450
				papal scriptor and abbreviator	1403	23	10	papal secretary?	1413	33	2	secretary of Beaufort	1418	38	5	papal secretary
				papal scriptor and abbreviator	1422	32	5	papal secretary	1417	27	>28#	d. >1445				
ani i	1432	40	2	notary of apostolic <i>camera</i>	1432	40	2	papal secretary	1432	42	20#	d. 1452				
								court poet in Milan, lecturer in Pavia	1429	35	5	royal councillor in Naples, court humanist, leading chancery positions	1434	40	37#	d. 1450
								secretary and ambassador of Venetian administration in Constantinople	1420	22	7	professor at Florentine <i>studio</i>	1429	31	5	professor in Sicily
				tutor of Medici children	<1431	<33	?	professor at Florentine <i>studio</i>	1431	33	13#	Florentine chancellor	1444	46	9	d. 1450
								secretary in Visconti chancery	1419	20	31#	papal secretary	1450	51	6	secretary in Milan chancery
a	1431	31	2	studies Greek in Constantinople	1434	34	4	professor in Genua	1439	39	8#	d. 1447				
r	1429	29	6#	<i>secretary of Gloucester</i>	1436	36	2	<i>chancery position in Milan</i>	1440	40*	2	<i>opts against humanist career</i>				
	1434	29	2	secretarial position in Genua	1436	31	8	chancellor in Genua	1444	39	2	court historiographer in Naples	1446	41	11#	d. 1450
of o ca	1432	27	3	secretary of Niccolò Albergati	1435	30	4#	secretary of Felix V	1439	34	3	secretary of Frederick III	1442	37	3	entirely private remuneration
f	1438	32	0.5	<i>familiaris of Francesco Condulmer</i>	1438	32	0.5	<i>d. 1438</i>								annual
	1427	21	4	lecturer in Novara	1431	25	1	professor in Pavia, secretary in Visconti chancery	1434	29	13#	court humanist in Ferrara	1448	42	9	tutor in Sforza in Milan
n	1429	22	4	unknown	1433	26	4	secretary of Alfonso of Aragon	1437	30 34.3	7	papal secretary	1444	37	14#	d. 1450

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